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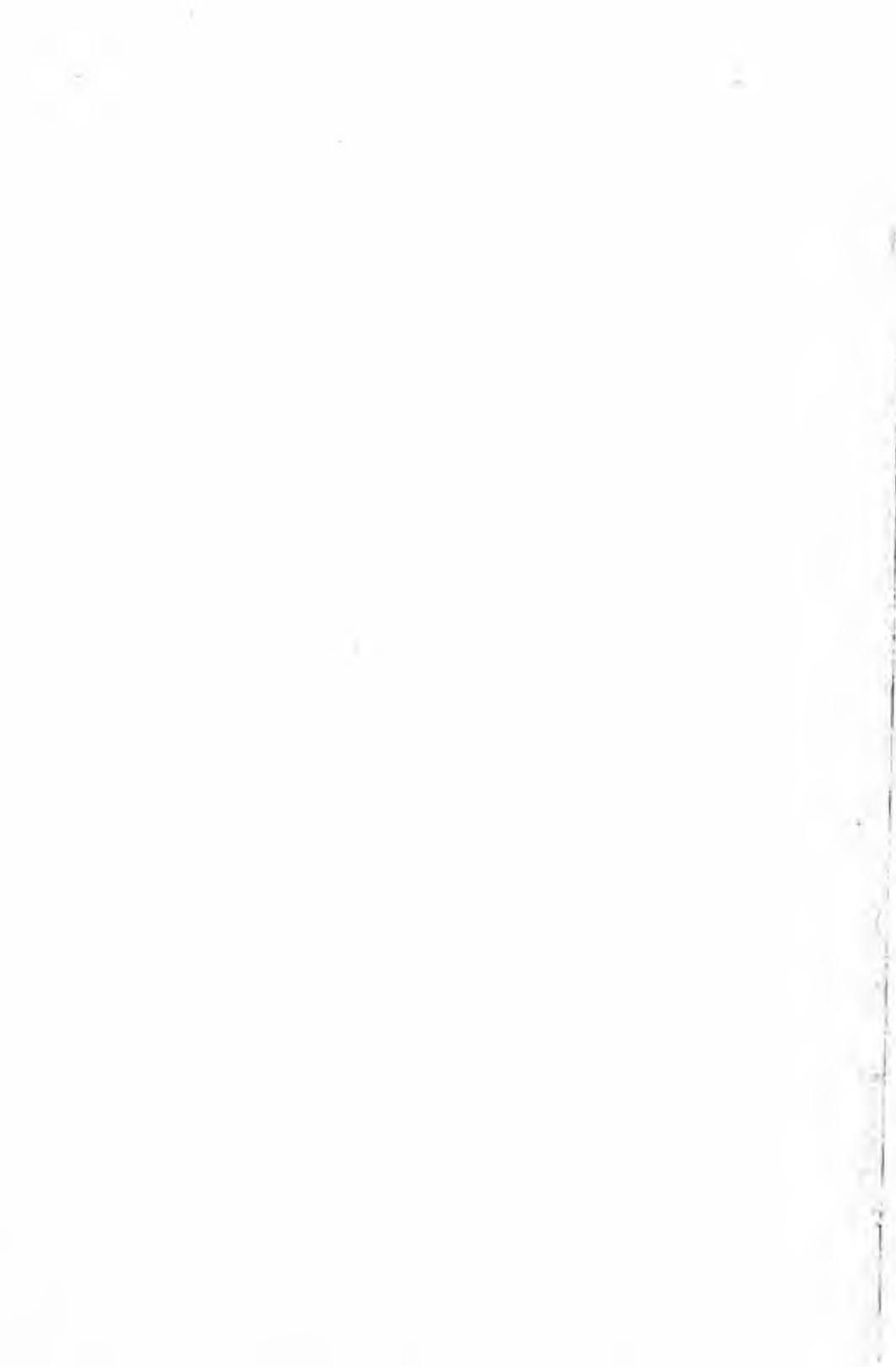
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# Surat in the Seventeenth Century

A Study in Urban History  
of pre-modern India

Balkrishna Govind Gokhale

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For my wife Beena



## PREFACE

The urban history of India, particularly of the 'pre-modern' period, is a relatively uncharted field. Apart from incidental notices in standard works dealing with the entire range of Indian history such as the *Cambridge History of India* or the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's *The History and Culture of the Indian People* or those devoted to specific periods, 'ancient', 'medieval', 'Mughal' or 'British', only a few works have been published so far devoted exclusively to histories of Indian cities. Among these are B.N. Puri's *Cities in Ancient India* (Meerut, 1966), and H.K. Naqvi's *Urban Centers in Upper India* (New York, 1968) and *Urbanisation and Urban Centres Under the Great Mughals* (Simla, 1971). These, however, deal with a group of urban centres and, consequently, have no detailed accounts of a specific city such as Delhi, Agra or Lahore. K.K. Gillion's *Ahmedabad-A Study in Indian Urban History* (Berkeley, 1968) has only one chapter of its five addressed to the history of Ahmedabad of the pre-modern period.

The present work is an attempt to focus attention on the growth of the port-city of Surat during the seventeenth century, that is from the time of its annexation by Akbar, the Great Mughal in 1573 to the last days of Aurangzeb in the 1700s. In its eight chapters the work treats the history of the city, its people, its government, hinterland, markets, merchant communities, the merchant prince - Virji Vora - and the role of the European traders in its economic life. I have used materials from the archives of the English, Dutch and French East India Companies, literature in Gujarati and Sanskrit, and Mughal biographical and administrative works. I have also drawn upon a large number of modern works dealing with the commercial and economic history of India during the century under survey. My indebtedness to the authors of these works is obvious and is reflected in the notes and bibliography.

I am aware of the many lacunae in the work I am now offering to the interested readership. Economic historians will find in it a great deal which may be criticized, my only excuse being my approach is not that of an economic but rather an urban historian. This may sound as a species of quibbling for in such cases as Surat, a pre-eminently mercantile city, a precise line dividing economic from urban history is difficult to draw. But such a difference, I believe, does exist and I have demonstrated it by dealing with such topics as religious and social habits, housing and life-styles, which would ordinarily be only of a peripheral interest to an economic historian. My primary purpose is to obtain, as far as is possible on the basis of existing sources, a broad view of Surat as an urban conglomeration in the seventeenth century. As to my success or lack of it in what I set out to do is not for me to say. My aim was rather modest and that was to sketch the contours of Surat's being and life during the century of its rise, growth and decline. If and when indigenous Gujarati documents from the city of Surat become available I am sure many of the lacunae could then be filled



## PREFACE

and a more definite history of the city be written. My hope is that until such time my work will serve as a tentative and preliminary account of the urban history of that great city of 'Mughal' India.

I am indebted to a large number of people for their assistance in my undertaking. I am grateful to the authorities of the India Office Library in London, Dr. B. Anderson, Librarian, University of Bombay, the Asiatic Society of Bombay, and friends in Surat, Baroda and Ahmadabad; particularly, Professors K.D. Desai and D. Pathak of Gujarat University, Ahmadabad, for their help.

The list of my obligations to persons who have helped in my work is, indeed, long. I am grateful to Dr. H. S. Stroupe, Dean, Graduate School and the Graduate Council of Wake Forest University for various grants to enable me to travel to Europe and India and for publication of this work. My thanks are also due to President J. Ralph Scales, Provost Edwin G. Wilson, and Dean Thomas E. Mullen and colleagues of the History Department, Wake Forest University for their interest in my work. I am thankful to Mrs. Cynthia C. Dervin of the Asian Studies Program, Wake Forest University, for her secretarial assistance. I must also express my appreciation to the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies for including my work in their Monograph Series and to Curzon Press for seeing the work through the press.

Balkrishna Govind Gokhale

Wake Forest University  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina  
July 1977

## ABBREVIATIONS

Bibliographic information for these works is given in the  
bibliography at the end of this book.

India Office Records	<i>IOR</i>
Letters Received by the East India Company Etc.	<i>Letters Received</i>
The English Factories in India	<i>EFI</i>
The English Factories in India-New Series	<i>EFI-NS</i>
The Voyage of Jan Huygen Van Linchoten	<i>Voyage</i>
De Remonstrantie Van W. Geleyensen De Jongh	<i>De Jongh</i>
Pieter Van Dam: Beschryvinghe etc.	<i>PVD</i>
Pieter Van Den Broecke In Azie	<i>Broecke</i>
Jan Pietszoon Coen: Bescheiden etc.	<i>Coen</i>
Generale Missiven Van Gouverneur etc.	<i>Generale Missiven</i>
A New Account of the East by A. Hamilton	<i>Hamilton</i>
The Journal of John Jourdain	<i>Journal</i>
The Voyage of Thomas Best	<i>Best</i>
The Voyage of Nicholas Downton	<i>Downton</i>
The East India Company Journals of Captain Keeling etc.	<i>Keeling's Journal</i>
The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe	<i>Embassy</i>
Beschryvinghe Van de . . . Johan Albrecht Van Mandelslo	<i>Mandelslo</i>
The Travels of Peter Mundy etc.	<i>Mundy</i>
The Empire of the Great Mogol by De Laet	<i>De Laet</i>
The Travels of Pietro Della Valle etc.	<i>Della Valle</i>
Storia Do Mogor-Manucci	<i>Storia</i>
Travels in the Mogul Empire by Francois Bernier	<i>Bernier</i>
The Travels of Abbé Carré etc.	<i>Abbé Carré</i>
The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri	<i>T &amp; C</i>
A New Account of East India etc. by John Fryer	<i>Fryer</i>
J. Ovington: A Voyage to Surat	<i>Ovington</i>
De Opkomst Der Westerkwartieren etc.	<i>Opkomst</i>
History of Gujarat-Commissariatt	<i>HOG</i>
Provincial Government of the Mughals—P. Saran	<i>PGM</i>
The Ain-i-Akbari	<i>Ain</i>
Journal of Indian History	<i>JIH</i>
Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient	<i>JSEHO</i>
The Book of Duarte Barbosa	<i>Duarte Barbosa</i>



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## CHAPTER I

*The City*

Located on the banks of the Tapi river and close to a corridor of international commerce, the Arabian Sea, Surat ( $21^{\circ} 10' N$   $72^{\circ} 44' E$ ) was ideally suited to develop into the leading mercantile conglomeration in India of the seventeenth century. The span of the history of its urban greatness covers a little over a century. It began its struggle for eminence during the second half of the sixteenth century, reached the peak of its prosperity in the seventeenth and began its slow and convoluted journey into insignificance in the opening decades of the eighteenth century.

Surat is of extraordinary interest in the urban history of pre-modern India. A city that grew by "casual accumulation", it had neither the order of Fatehpur-Sikri nor the grace of Agra. Like Banaras and other 'pilgrim' cities it had no special holiness. It was not even a provincial capital as was Ahmadabad for the province of Gujarat in which Surat itself was located. Its heroes were the most unlikely types, the *Baniyas*, customarily regarded with a mixture of contemptuous amusement both by the minions of government and leaders of their own Hindu society. In its history the flowering of the genius of its *Baniyas* played a dominant role and Surat was the first Indian city to feel the impact of European commerce in a large way in India. Surat, in a sense, is a 'palimpsest' inscribed over with a host of unusual emendations and marginal notes.<sup>1)</sup>

The term 'city' has been defined in numerous and varied ways. It may simply be called "a tool for the production and exchange of goods and services. A city may also be a place where people live, study, play, worship or have children. It may be a place of magic or of terror, of beauty or of ugliness". It is much more than a mere settlement which is "an aggregate of people living in the same locality". It is essentially a community, "the maximal group of persons who normally reside in face-to-face association". A favourable ecological base, an advanced technology in both agricultural and industrial activities and a complex social organization are the preconditions for the birth and growth of a city. Markets, defence and government are the three basic needs of a city. In economic terms its inhabitants are primarily engaged in the exchange of goods and services rather than their production and this exchange is sustained and continuous rather than spasmodic. Finally it may also be "a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, of unorganized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in those customs and are transmitted with this tradition". Arnold Toynbee demands that a city be "a genuine community in fact" and that "in order to become a city, it would also evolve at least the rudiments of a soul. This is the essence of cityhood".<sup>2)</sup>

There is also a 'typology' of cities. The late Professor D. R. Gadgil classified the traditional Indian cities into three types. These are (a) places of

pilgrimage such as Banaras and Puri, (b) provincial or imperial capitals, Agra, Delhi, Bijapur, Golkonda and (c) commercial depots, Patna, Burhanpur and Surat.<sup>3)</sup>

The origins of Surat are lost in the uncertainties of Indian pre-history. Legendary accounts speak of it as Suryapura. During the 10th-13th centuries it was a part of the Kingdom of the Chaulukyas of Gujarat. In 1407 it was incorporated into the Muslim Sultanate of Gujarat to which it belonged until it was taken by Akbar the Great (1556-1605) in 1573 in the course of his campaign for the conquest of the province of Gujarat. It was then constituted into a *sarkar* (administrative and revenue division) of the *subah* (province) of Gujarat ruled from its capital, Ahmadabad. But its special position was duly recognized by the Mughal administration which reserved to itself the appointment of its Governor, Commander of its Fort and other officials who were held directly responsible to Agra. In 1529-1530 it was sacked and parts of it burned by the Portuguese and it was not until 1612, when the English Captain Thomas Best inflicted a sanguinary defeat on a Portuguese armada off its coasts, that the Portuguese threats to it were contained. Its security was disturbed four times during the seventeenth century. In 1627 Prince Khurram (the future Emperor Shah Jahan 1628-1658), in the course of his rebellion against his father, the Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627), took the Fort on December 15 and a large ransom. In 1657 Prince Murad, one of the contenders in the War of Succession in which Aurangzeb (1658-1707) emerged the victor, sent a force to Surat to plunder it. In 1664 Shivaji, the Maratha leader, sacked it for five or six days in January. He repeated his exploit in 1670 but with less booty. The Marathas continued to menace the city after that date from time to time. The disintegration of the *Pax Mughalica* under Aurangzeb and the rising tide of Maratha wars led to the city's decline in the opening decades of the eighteenth century.

European contacts with Surat began with the advent of the Portuguese in the opening decades of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese aimed at creating an 'oceanic' empire which they tried to control from their settlements in Goa, Daman and Diu on the western coast. They imposed their system of passports which every Indian ship was required to carry on pain of capture, loss of cargo and enslavement of persons on board. The Portuguese also wanted to share Surat's trade with Europe and with the establishment of cordial relations between them and the Mughals during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir they were able to send their agents to Surat and elsewhere in the Mughal dominions. Their monopoly over the Eastern trade, however, was effectively challenged and eliminated with the coming of the English and the Dutch.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 opened the way for Englishmen to 'adventure' into the east. The Jesuit Father Thomas Stephens (1579-1619), who spent many years in Goa, had written letters to England about possibilities in India and Ralph Fitch and John Mildenhall, who had travelled in India in the

1580s and 1590s, opened up for the English mind the vast wealth of the Mughal empire. In 1592 Jan Huygen Van Linschoten (1563-1611), the Dutchman who had spent five years in Goa, returned to Holland and began publishing his findings on the strengths and weaknesses of the Portuguese in Asia and the commercial fortunes awaiting Hollanders should they decide to begin their own ventures into Asia. In 1598 Van Linschoten's *Itinerio* was published in an English translation and commercial circles in England and Holland were impatiently prodding their rulers to permit sending of voyages and setting up of chartered companies. The English East India Company was chartered in London in 1600 and the United Dutch Company in Amsterdam in 1602. English and Dutch agents then visited Surat in the opening decade of the seventeenth century. In 1608 Captain William Hawkins arrived in Surat on his way to Agra and Sir Thomas Roe spent some three years (1615-1618) in India in an attempt to secure from Jahangir a treaty giving the English trading rights. The English Factory in Surat began functioning from 1612 while the Dutch had also established themselves in the city by that time. The history of these European traders in Surat will be given in a later chapter. The French were the last to arrive in Surat (1667) and their stay there was also the briefest of the three.

## (2)

Ecologically Surat was very favourably situated. It lay on the lower reaches of the river Tapi. The Tapi rises in the Betul district of Madhya Pradesh and flows some 436 miles westward before meeting the Arabian Sea. The last 32 miles of its stretch are tidal in nature and consequently the water here tends to be brackish. This segment of the river's course has also been heavily silted so that only ships of low tonnage can navigate their way to the city harbour. The large ocean-going ships, therefore, had to use Swally ('Swally Hole' or 'Swally Marine' of English accounts) as their port where the ships could safely ride at anchor protected by a sandbar. The general climate was that of the tropical kind, 'generally intemperate' as an English communication of February 10, 1616/17 describes it. There were three climatic divisions in the year. From February to May was the 'dry' season of increasing heat and humidity which became almost intolerable as May turned into June. Then came the 'wet' months from June to September, the Monsoon season of heavy rainfall (60 to 70 inches) of stormy seas and flooded roadways which made movement of goods and men very difficult. The rain, in its advent and quantity, was generally reliable but it could be wayward from time to time. In 1622 the rains continued until October 13 and many natives remarked that in many many years they had not gone on that long. In 1625 there was a hurricane uprooting trees, demolishing many houses, damaging many ships in the harbour and generally doing great damage. In 1626 the first rains came on May 25; the next year they did not show up until July 12. In 1628 the arrival of the rains was more seasonal, on June 19. From November to February was the 'cool'



season, generally dry, and it was then that commerce came back to life with caravans moving up and down the routes into the interior to Broach, Baroda, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur and Agra. Ships were laden for their voyages to the Persian Gulf or the Malaysian area, to ports on the west coast of the country and to Europe. The Banias were busy buying, warehousing and selling goods of the most diverse kind.

Surat and Gujarat had their share of climatic and tectonic alarms through the century. On May 27, 1625, wrote Broecke, the Dutch chief in Surat, there was a strong hurricane at 10 p.m. causing great loss to houses and ships. On March 29, 1626 he received the news of an earthquake at Patan, north of Ahmadabad, which wrecked nearly 250 houses and left behind 180 casualties though Surat was fortunate to escape it. In August 1636 there was a mild earthquake in Surat but there was no danger to life and property. Around 1683 "a violent pestilence first broke out" in Surat and from the details given by the English clergyman Ovington, who used the word 'plague', it was some kind of a severe epidemic of influenza. The death toll is reported to have been 300 a day.<sup>4)</sup>

Surat was surrounded by a region rich in agriculture producing wheat, rice, *bajra* and millet, cotton, indigo, fruits such as oranges, lemons and pomocitron, a flourishing dairy industry producing milk and butter in large quantities, palm trees that gave the heady drink toddy and the liquor called *arrack*. The major industries in the surrounding areas were production of cotton yarn and weaving of a number of distinctive cotton textiles in demand in Asia and Europe, manufacture of indigo (Jambusar near Broach and Sarkhej near Ahmadabad), gum-lac, ship-building and making of heavy sail-cloth for ships. The villages around the city presented a scene of great charm after the annual rains with spinners, weavers and dyers busy with textile production and heads of golden grain dancing in the gentle breeze flowing from the west. The first impression of visitors was that of a 'fair' city, bustling with industry and commerce, prosperous with its people apparently happy with making money.<sup>5)</sup> From time to time, however, dire shadows spread over it as during 1630-1632 when famine stalked the land and the dead were so many that most were left untended in the streets. About this great famine there will be more later. Years of scarcity also punctuated periods of plenty but the city was able to spring back to life and prosperity with remarkable resilience.

The size of the city's population during the seventeenth century can only be estimated. An account of the famine of 1630-1632 states that up to 30,000 people had died of starvation in the city and that a large number had fled before death overtook them. Assuming that some 60% to 70% of the population had fled, the number of the dead may give us some idea of the total population which could be anywhere between 150,000 to 200,000. The French traveller Thevenot makes an interesting observation on the seasonal fluctuation in Surat's population. He says: "Surat is of an indifferent bigness, and it is hard to tell exactly the number of its inhabitants, because the seasons render it unequal:

there are a great many all the year round; but in the time of the Monsoon, that is to say, in the time when ships can go and come to the Indies without danger, in the months of January, February, March and even April (obviously the 'dry' and 'cool' season is meant here), the town is so full of people, that lodgings can hardly be had, and the three suburbs are full". Other travellers describe the size of the city in general terms as of "good quality", "handsome greatness . . . very populous", a "place of medium size" or "of moderate size". Writing in 1689 Ovington describes its spread, including the suburbs, as "between two and three English miles, tending somewhat in its position to the form of a semicircle or half moon, because of the winding of the river, to which half of it adjoins". Careri calls it "not large" in 1694-1695.<sup>6)</sup>

The importance of the river Tapi for Surat was obvious. Though its water tended to be brackish in the monsoon months it could still be used upstream for agriculture and animals. Tapi is described as gliding "by the town in swift tides and at spring tides it bears ships of 100 ton burden up to the Surat walls". The sections along the main part of the town were provided with paved banks or *ghats* and a little below Surat was located the yard where small boats could be repaired. In some cases large ships and boats were also built there and in 1650 extensive repairs to the English ship *Falcon* (500 tons) were carried out.

The customs office was located on the river where the foreign visitor first stopped and unloaded his goods. Fryer says: "The Custom-house has a good front, where the chief customer appears certain hours to *chop* (*chaap* = stamp), that is, to mark goods outward-bound, and clear those received in". The place was usually filled with officials and servants, merchants and brokers.<sup>7)</sup> The visitor also noticed the walls of the city as he came in. The earliest reference to any kind of defensive enclosure is by John Jourdain who refers to the walls of Surat. This, however, may mean a kind of a ditch on the three sides of the city with thick hedges as observed by Fitch. Mundy in 1630 speaks of the city encircled with a bad ditch, "excepting towards the river side". De Laet's account (about 1631) speaks of the town being open on one side, near the open ground (*maiden*) facing the Fort, "but on all other sides it is fenced by a dry ditch and an earthen rampart with three gates". Van den Broecke also speaks of the city being surrounded by an earthen wall and a dry canal (*maar met een aerdewall ende drooge gracht omsingelt*). Mandelslo (1638-1639) calls the city four-sided (*vierkant*) and surrounded by a deep canal and hedges (*diepen gracht en bosch omringt*). Tavernier calls the walls of the city "built of earth". Manucci remarks that when he was in the city for the first time (1656) it was not "encircled by walls, its only defence being then a fort on the bank of the river. On the second and third occasions (1677, 1683 ?) that I visited the port the town had a good wall, made by Orangzeb (Aurangzeb) on the occasion of the war with Xevagi (Shivaji)". In 1666 Thevenot states that when he arrived in Surat "the walls of it were only of earth, and almost all ruinous; but they were beginning to build them of brick,

a fathom and half thick; they gave them but the same height; and nevertheless they designed to fortify the place as strong as it could be made; because of the irruption that a Raja . . . had made into it sometime before. However the engineer hath committed a considerable fault in the setting out of his walls; he hath built them so near the Fort, that the town will be safe from the canon of the Castle, and those who defend it may easily be galled by musquet-shot from the town". In 1675 Fryer saw the "walls which are building to surround it, and a ditch accompanying it (though but shallow, yet the wall is high, and of good well-baked brick)". Ovington in 1689 noticed the city "fortified with a wall, which is flanked at certain distances with towers and battlements" but Careri in 1694-1695 still found the walls "weak". Pieter Van Dam, writing toward the end of the century, refers to the high wall and a dry ditch, the wall rather weak though equipped with gateways and round towers and well provided with cannon and embrasures but so cramped that the cannon cannot be retracted or pushed when needed.<sup>8)</sup>

From the descriptions quoted above it seems that the city had only a ditch and some kind of earthen walls surrounding its three landward sides until 1664 when Shivaji attacked it. Thereafter the Mughal government made efforts to build better fortifications by building walls in two parts, one to protect the Fort and the other the city.

From 1609 onward there are references to a number of gates through which the city could be entered. In 1609 Fitch saw three gates. One was the northern leading to Broach via Variao, a suburb of the city. The second was the western gate leading to Burhanpur and the third, the southern, leading to Navsari. Peter Mundy in 1630 mentions some seven gates though he names only three, those listed by Fitch. De Laet also mentions three gates while Ovington refers to six or seven gates "where are sentinels fixed continually requiring account, upon the least suspicion, of all that enter in, or pass out of the city". Such precautions were obviously provoked by the Maratha raids after 1664. The inner walls were called *Saharpanha* (succour of the city) while the outer walls were named, rather pretentiously, *A lampanha* (succour of the world).<sup>9)</sup>

The Fort was the principal landmark of the city. It was built in 1540 to protect the city against the Portuguese, by one Khudawand Khan, a minister of the Sultan of Gujarat, Mahmud II. Al Badaoni says: "they say that the reason for Khudawand Khan's building this fort was, that the Portuguese used to exercise all kinds of animosity and hostility against the people of Islam, and used to occupy themselves in devastating the country, and tormenting the pious. At the time of the commencement of the building they ceased not to throw the builders into confusion, firing continually at them from their ships, but they could not prevent them. The architects skilled in geometry and expert in subtleties carried the foundations of the ceinture of the fort down to the water, and also dug a

moat of the same depth, and on the two sides of the fort which adjoined the land they built a wall of stone, adamant, and burnt brick. The length of the wall was thirty-five yards, and the breadth of the four walls of the fort was fifteen yards, and their height as well as the depth of the moat was twenty yards. The centres of each two stones were joined with iron clamps and the interstices and joints were made firm with molten lead. The battlements and embrasures were so lofty and beautiful that the eye of the spectator was astonished at them. On the bastions which overlooked the sea they made a gallery, which in the opinion of the Europeans, is a specialty of Portugal and invention of their own". During Akbar's siege in 1572-1573 there were some breaches caused to the walls which the Emperor ordered to be repaired. When he inspected the Fort after its surrender to him, "he came across some large cannon and immense pieces of ordnance. They had been brought by sea by Sulaiman Sultan, the Emperor of Turkey, when he came with a large army intending to take possession of the ports of Gujarat; but afterwards on account of some adverse circumstances that army retired and those cannon from that time were left behind on the river bank. At the time of the building of Surat, Khudawand Khan Wazir brought most of them into the Fort, and the remainder the Governor of Junagarh dragged into that fortress. The Emperor commanded that they should be removed from there, where so many were of no use, and be carried to the fortress of Agra".

Many of the European visitors have commented on this Fort. Fitch says that, "as you come up the river, on the right hand side stands the castle, well walled, ditched, reasonable great and fair, with a number of fair pieces (pieces of ordnance) whereof some of exceeding greatness. It has one gate to the greenward, with a draw-bridge and a small port (i.e. gate) on the river side". Mundy and Mandelslo both call the Fort strong and fine but Broecke adds that it was built of grey stone, in the "Moorish manner", not really strong enough to withstand a well-equipped and spirited attack. Tavernier calls it "poor", with towers at each of the four angles. Thevenot says that it was at the south end of the town, amended by Ovington as south-west part of the city. Thevenot describes it as "of reasonable bigness, square and flanked at each corner by a large tower. The ditches on three sides are filled with sea (*sic*) water, and the fourth side which is to the west is washed by the river. Several pieces of cannon appear on it mounted; and the revenues of the King that are collected in the province are kept there, which are never sent to court but by express orders. The entry to it is on the west side by a lovely gate which is the *Bazar* or *Maidan*". Ovington calls it square in shape and with several lodgings within. Pieter Van Dam refers to it as strong in appearance but only deceptively so. Careri calls it weak and without any ramparts.<sup>10)</sup>

In the vicinity of the Fort, facing the custom-house, was the Mint, "a large town of offices within itself; hither repair all the *shroffs* or bankers, for the proof of silver, which in this place is the most refined, and purest from alloy, in the world; as is also their gold". Between the Mint and the Custom-house there

was an open stretch of ground called the *maidan*. Of this Ovington says: "In the midst of the city is a spacious vacant place, called Castle-green, because of its nearness to the castle, on which are laid all sorts of goods in the open air, both day and night, excepting the *Mussoun* time. And here the English, French, and Dutch, with the natives, place their bales, and prepare them as loadings for their ships".<sup>11)</sup> This was the open air bazaar for Surat where a large number of buyers and sellers met everyday.

## (3)

Of the layout of the city we have a number of interesting descriptions. Peter Mundy says that Surat had "some reasonable long straight streets" especially those that led to the major gates in and out of the city. Thevenot calls the Surat streets "large and even but they are not paved". Van Dam states that most of the streets in the inner city were narrow and difficult for rapid movement of men and goods. Ovington says that "the streets are some too narrow, but in many places of convenient breadth; in the evening, especially near the Bazar, or market-place, are more populous than any part of London; and so much thronged, that 'tis not very easy to pass through the multitude of Banians and other merchants that expose their goods. For here they stand with their silks and stuffs in their hands, or upon their heads, to invite such as pass to come and buy them". Fryer calls attention to the high streets around the Bazar.<sup>12)</sup> The city was divided into wards many of which were inhabited by members of certain castes and occupations. The residential patterns followed caste and occupational divisions for Banias tended to live together in one compact ward or locality with adjoining streets being occupied by Brahmans and Jains. The Muslims lived in a quarter of their own while the untouchables (the *Halalkhors*) who looked after household and public sanitation lived on the outskirts of the city.<sup>13)</sup>

Fryer says that the city smells were very nasty because of the "want of privies, and their making every door a dunghill; yet never had they any plague, the heats evaporating, and the rains washing this filth away". But Ovington refers to the outbreak of an epidemic which in 1691 carried away 200,000 people in 18 days. It is very probable that sanitary conditions in Surat deteriorated in the 1660s and later because of overcrowding. The walls that were built enclosed only some parts of the city and there was the eagerness for many families to move into the protected part because of fear of the Maratha raids. Also, from time to time, the more tyrannical elements among the Muslims were threats to Hindu women especially after dark. Broecke mentions an incident when a daughter of a prominent broker was abducted from a "narrow" street by a servant of a "Moor" and kept in confinement for a few days. She was later released on payment of ransom. Such apprehensions added to the unsanitary state of the city.<sup>14)</sup>

The houses in the city were of two kinds. There were those, few in number,



that were impressive in their opulent look and belonged to the richer sections. The others, perhaps the majority, were humble both in construction and comforts. Peter Mundy speaks of "some fair buildings scattered here and there". Tavernier states that the "houses of private persons are like barns, being constructed of nothing but reeds, covered with cow-dung mixed with clay, to fill the interstices, and to prevent those outside from seeing between the reeds what goes on inside. In the whole of Surat there are only nine or ten well-built houses, and the Shahbandar or chief of merchants, owns two or three of them. The others belong to Musalman merchants. . ." Thevenot noticed in 1666: "The houses of this town on which the inhabitants have been willing to lay out money, are flat, as in Persia, and pretty well built; but they cost dear, because there is no stone in the country; seeing they are forced to make use of brick and lime, a great deal of timber is employed, which must be brought from Daman by sea, the wood of the country which is brought a great way off, being much dearer because of the land-carriage. Brick and lime are very dear also; and one cannot build an ordinary house at less than five or six hundred livres for brick, and twice as much for lime. The houses are covered with tiles made half round, and half an inch thick, but ill burnt so that they look still white when they are used, and do not last; and it is for that reason that the bricklayers lay them double, and make them to keep whole. Canes which they call Bambous serve for latches to fasten the tiles to; and the carpenter's work which supports all this, is only made of pieces of round timber; such houses as these are for the rich; but those the meaner sort of people live in, are made of canes, and covered with branches of palm-trees". Fryer observes that "The town has very many noble and lofty houses, of the Moor merchants, flat at top, and terraced with plaster. There is a Parsi broker to the King of Bantam, who has turned the outside of his pockets on a sumptuous house, a specious fabric, but ill contrived, as are many of the Banias. They, for the most part, affect no stately buildings, living in humble cells or sheds. Glass is dear, and scarcely purchaseable (unless by way of Stambole, or Constantinople, from the Venetians, from whom they have some panes of painted glass in sash windows) therefore their windows, except some few of the highest note, are usually folding doors, screened with *cheeks*, or latises, carved in wood, or ising-glass, or more commonly oyster-shells". He found dwellings over-crowded, with "two or three families together in an hovel" and animals living in close proximity.<sup>15)</sup>

Impressionistic as these observations are they give us some interesting facts as noticed by foreigners unfamiliar with the cultural *mores* of various communities and the demands of the tropical climate in household architectural styles. The dearness of timber is surprising. Nearby Navsari and Gandevi are frequently mentioned as sources for excellent timber which was used for shipbuilding. The surrounding landscape is also described as wooded enough to shelter wild animals which were often hunted by members of the Surat Muslim nobility with the help of

hawks and trained dogs. In these descriptions we have actually three different kinds of houses built for three very different classes of people. The imposing structures built of brick and lime, with some glass windows and curtains of Bamboo-slats interwoven with *khus* (a fragrant grass much esteemed for its cooling qualities when sprinkled with water especially during the hot summer months) evidently belonged to the wealthy among the Muslims, Hindus, Jains and a few Parsis. Their architectural form was dictated by environmental and cultural needs. They fronted the streets with a large wooden door for entrance leading to an open rectangle around which were distributed the living quarters. The terraces were especially useful during the summer for they were used for sleeping during the nights when the stifling heat in the rooms made them uncomfortable. The tropical climate of great heat followed by drenching rains took a heavy toll of building materials and such impressive structures could be constantly maintained in good repair only by the rich. The problem, most of the time, was that of keeping the sun out rather than letting it in as is the case in more temperate and colder regions. The custom of segregation of women among the Muslims also influenced the style of building and distribution of space within the homes.

The case with the Banias was somewhat different. Most of them were the small shopkeepers, *shroffs* (money-changers and exchange-dealers) and brokers. Their homes were primarily constructed of brick, lime and timber and roofed with the half-circle clay tiles arranged in double rows. The European travellers especially noticed the fact of overcrowding in many of these houses. This overcrowding must be explained in terms of the family structure which was of the joint paternal kind where all the brothers and their families tended to live under the same roof. Insecurity of property and wealth stemming from real or imagined fear of expropriation by the Mughal government made plain living and concealment rather than consumption of wealth a virtue which in part may explain the absence of a great many fine houses.<sup>16</sup> As for the poorer sections the simplicity of their life-style was born of dire necessity for the contrast between vast accumulation of wealth and apparent poverty was very noticeable in India through most of the country's history. As will be shown in a later chapter the artisans, labourers and peasants seldom had the means to spend on good living for the demands of mere day-to-day living consumed all their capital and energies.

Among the prominent residential buildings in the city were the homes of the Governor, the Shah Bunder, the Master of the Mint and leading merchants such as Haji Zahid Beg, Haji Kasim, Khwaja Minaz, Virji Vora and Mohandas Parekh. The house of the Parsi broker (Rustamji Manekji?) has already been alluded to. Surat had a number of impressive mosques and among these were that of Khwaja Diwan Sahib of around 1530, the Nav Saiyid (Nine Saiyids), that of Saiyid Idrus built in 1639, and the mosque and tomb of Mirza Sami of 1540. There were also institutions of Islamic learning and to one of these Aurangzeb made a generous endowment in 1670. The Jains built in Surat a large number of

their own shrines some of which were well known for their marble which was brought from Rajasthan. Most foreign travellers have noticed the great Banyan tree, "a little beyond the Great Tank" and "much honoured by the Banians". Della Valle says; "On another side of the City, but out of the circuit of the houses, in an open place, is seen a great and fair tree" held in great reverence by the Hindus and dedicated to Parvati, the spouse of Shiva. Thevenot states that "its circuit is round, and is fourscore paces in diameter, which make above thirty fathom: and has by it a pagoda dedicated to an idol which they call Mameva (Mahadeva?). . . . . We found a Brahman sitting there, who put some red colour upon the foreheads of those who come to pay their devotions, and received the presents of rice or cocos that they offered him. That pagoda is built under the tree in form of a grot; the outside is painted with diverse figures representing the fables of their false gods, and in the grot there is a head all over head".<sup>17)</sup>

Fryer refers to what he, calls "a seminary" for Brahmans at Phulpara, a suburb of Surat about 1½ or 2 miles distant from the city on the river. From his description it seems more to have been a place on the river *ghat* where Brahmans congregated and were offered *dakshina* (offerings of money or food) and the Brahmans blessed the devotees "by impressing a mark" on the forehead. He also refers to "two pagodas remaining, but defaced by the Moors: one of them, however, still shows a crust of plaster, with images antique enough, but of excellent durance and splendour, like alabaster, made of a white loam calcinated, and then called *arras*; which they powder and steep in water three or four years before it is fit for their purpose; the longer the better". He also noticed many *sati* stones or memorials.<sup>18)</sup>

Surat had at least three *sarais* for lodging for the visitors, especially merchants. They were used by the Persian, Armenian, Turkish and Central Asiatic merchants who frequented Surat during the trading season. One special institution noticed by European travellers was the hospital for animals. Ovington says: "For within a mile distance from Surat is a large hospital supported by the Banians in its maintenance of cows (*Panfrapole*), horses, goats, dogs, and other animals diseased, or lame, infirm or decayed by age; for when an ox, by many years of toil grows feeble, and unfit for any further service; lest this should tempt a merciless owner to take away his life, because he finds him an unprofitable burden, and his flesh might be serviceable to him when he was dead; therefore the Banian reprieves his destiny" and the animal is placed in the shelter to spend the rest of its life."<sup>19)</sup>

Oxen were generally used for the transportation of goods. They were yoked to "hackeries" with their horns tipped with copper or silver and decked out, on special days, with drapes. The "hackeries" were two-wheeled vehicles "made of a square figure. . . but the seat is flat, not raised with cushions to lean upon. They can carry three or four persons, and are all open on the sides, but supported at each corner, and in the middle by pilasters. Some of better fashion are hung



round, with an imperial overhead to fence off the scorching rays of the sun, and with a carpet spread under to sit upon". Wealthy persons rode in palanquins borne on the shoulders of four men. Horses were used only by the nobility and the better sorts were imported from Persia and Arabia.<sup>20)</sup>

Beyond the Broach gate lay the cemeteries with numerous tombs of Persians who died in Surat or members of the city's Muslim ruling classes. Then there were also the graves of the Armenians laid out east-west and several handsome Dutch tombs, and the final resting places of Englishmen, especially that of Sir George Oxenden (actually two tombs, Christopher and George who died in 1659 and 1669 respectively) and several Portuguese burial monuments.<sup>21)</sup>

## (4)

Surat had a number of fine gardens and parks. The *Indudutam* gives a lyrical description of the flowering trees and one of the notable parks was that of the princess which, in the words of Thevenot, was so called "because it belongs to the Great Mughals's sister. It is a great plot of trees of several kinds; as *Manguiers*, *palms*, *mirabolans*, *wars*, *mais* trees, and many very fair straight walls, and especially the four which make a cross over the garden, and have in the middle a small canal of water that is drawn by oxen out of a well. In the middle of the garden there is a building with four fronts, each whereof hath its Divan, with a closet at each corner; and before every one of these Divans there is a square bason full of water, from whence flow the little brooks which run through the chief walks".<sup>22)</sup>

Among the public works of Surat which evoked appreciative comments from all foreign observers was the famous Gopi *talao* or Gopi Tank. Its construction has been ascribed to one Gopi described as a local minister of the Gujarat king. Peter Mundy calls it a "fabric of as great cost, labour and time, admirable for its workmanship and bigness". It was an artificial lake "near half a mile about, made into 16 squares, built of great hard hewn stone, having from the upper superficies steps descending downwards about 20 in number, which go round about. Between every 5 or 6 is one much wider than the rest to walk on. It has 8 entrances for people and cattle, which go downwards; with walls, turrets and very fair pavement of great stones. In the middle of all stands a house. The passage where the water comes in deserves also notice, walled on each side, vaulted and supported with pillars. In the middle of this entry lies a very pretty small tank, hard by the greater. This I conceive is that the troubled water might settle before it runs into the other, being that the little one must be first filled, which is done, in times of rain, as well little as great; and then in the greatest may be about 3 fathom water at the deepest, and before the rain come again very little, or none at all, making use of the bottom or floor for the sowing of musk and water

mellons which grow up very suddenly there. Round about stand many fair tombs, gardens and trees, which make a pleasant prospect, the tank being full, whither we resort many times for recreation. . .” Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to the Mughal Court, who was in Surat in 1616, describes it as being of “free stone, in a polygon form, of above an hundred sides, every side eight and twenty yards; it has stairs on every side for men to descend, and many stopes (slopes ?) for horses. It is a wonderous work, both for the hugeness and for the braue building”. Mandelslo calls it octagonal but mistakes the pleasure-house in its centre for a tomb. Thevenot says that the tank had “six angles; the side of every angle is an hundred paces long, and the whole at least a musket-shot in diametre. The bottom is paved with large free-stone and there are steps all round in form of an amphitheatre, reaching from the brim to the bottom of the bason; they are each of them half a foot high, and are of lovely free-stone that hath been brought from about *Cambaye*; where there are no steps there is a sloping descent to the *bason*; and there are three places made for beasts to water at.

“In the middle of this reservatory there is a stone building about three fathoms every way, to which they go up by two little staircases. In this place they go to divert themselves, and take the fresh air; but they must go to it in boat. The great *bason* is filled with rainwater in the season when the rains fall, for after it has run through the fields, where it makes a kind of great chanal, over which they have been obliged to make bridges, it stops in a place enclosed within walls, from whence it passes into the *tanque* through three round holes, which are above four foot diameter, and hard by there is a kind of a Mahometan chappel.

“This *tanque* was made to the charge of a rich *Banian* named *Gopy*, who built it for the public; and heretofore all the water that was drunk in Surat came from this reservatory, for the five wells which at present supply the whole town, were not found out till long after it was built. It was begun at the same time as the Castle was, and they say, that the one cost as much as the other. It is certainly a work worthy of a king, and it must be compared to the fairest that the Romans ever made for public benefit. But seeing the Leventines let all things go to ruin for want of repair, it was above six foot filled with earth when saw it, and in danger sometime or other to be wholly choked up, if some charitable *Banian* be not at the charge of having it cleansed”. Writing in 1675 John Fryer described the tank as “without the walls of Surat, a mile in circumference”.<sup>23)</sup>

From Thevenot's observations it seems that the great tank was becoming silted up by 1666 and by 1675 it was beyond the inner walls of the city. The problem of the supply of potable water seems to have been critical most of the time. The river water tended to be brackish and while it could be used for washing it was often unusable for man or beast for drinking purposes. The Gopi tank supplied the needs of a large part of the city and this supply was augmented by a number of wells, large and small. With the increasing silting of the tank, and its location outside the walls surrounding the core of the city, its care must have been

greatly slackened. The Mughal government does not seem to have considered provision of drinking water to the citizenry as one of its duties. After Shivaji's raid in 1664 the city seems to have closed in upon itself. This critical water supply was one of the factors inhibiting the growth and urban spread of Surat. The river was another factor. The city was located on the south side of the river and is described as lying on the right by travellers coming up the river from Swally. Most of the facilities of the city were sited on this side and naturally the spread of the city lay in that direction. The greatest period of city growth seems to have been up to 1660 and within decades of that date the decline set in.

## (5)

The economy of Surat city was closely woven with the existence and functioning of several places on its periphery. Its chief port was Swally where all the ocean-going ships berthed at the bar. Thomas Best mentions that he anchored "in the road of Swally, in five fathom water, above an English mile from shore" on October 4, 1612. It was a fine roadstead "seven miles long and a mile broad, protected from the sea by a long sandbar. Here a fleet could ride at anchor much more safely than among the shifting shoals of the Tapti" Sir Thomas Roe declared: "The road of Swally and the port of Surat are the fittest for you in all the Mughal territory. . . the road at Swally, during the season is as safe as a pond".<sup>24)</sup> Arriving at Swally in February Pietro Della Valle describes it is a town where he was entertained by "certain Indian women of the town, public dancers" before he proceeded to Surat the next day. Peter Mundy, speaking of it in 1633, calls the "marine of Swally" a place on the strand or sand, "close to the waterside where the ships ride in the port (or hole), where for the time there is great doings, as landing and lading of goods". The town provided provisions for the ships and transportation for men and goods to Surat which formed the main occupation of the population. Mundy goes on to say: "Here are also 50 or 60 soldiers with a captain of the guard . . . to secure the place from Portugalls etc. . . Here are also coopers, sail-makers etc. . . Here is a great bazar, made by Banias, of bamboos, reeds etc., where all manner of necessities and commodities are to be had, also provisions, especially *toddy*, which finds currant and quick dispatch. The said bazar (as soon as the ships make way to be gone) is set on fire". Swally also proved to be very convenient for private trade in which many of the employees of the European establishments were involved.<sup>25)</sup>

Rander was a place of importance before the rise of Surat. It lay two miles above Surat on the right bank of the river and had its own Mughal official governing it. Tome Pires refers to it along with Surat and Duarte Barbosa writing about the year 1518 speaks of "fair houses and open places" within the town. He goes on to say: "It is a very pleasant and wealthy place, for the Moorish inhabitants thereof trade in their own ships with Malacca, Benguala, Tenasserim and Pegu,

also to Martaban and Sumatra, in spices of diverse sorts and drugs and silks in great abundance, musk, benzoin, porcelain and many other wares. Those who dwell here have many great and fair vessels, which carry on this trade, and whosoever would have at his disposal things from Malacca and China, let him go to this place, where he will find them in greater perfection than in any other place soever. The Moors who dwell here are wealthy and distinguished, fair in colour and of gentle birth. They go well attired, their women are beautiful and they have good houses well kept and furnished. In the front room of their houses they used to have many shelves all around, the whole room being surrounded by them as in a shop, all filled with fair and rich porcelain of new styles. The women are not shut up as elsewhere among the Moors, but go forth of their houses much in the daytime, doing whatsoever business they have in hand, with their faces uncovered, as among us". In 1529-30 Antonio da Silverira burnt Rander along with Surat and destroyed 20 ships and many smaller vessels in the port. With the rise of Surat Rander's importance declined though it continued to serve as a storage and weighing place for goods *en route* from Ahmadabad to Surat. A warehouse in Rander could be rented at Rs. 4 per month. The Muslims of Rander were called the *Navatts* or Malik Momins who were Shi'as and traced the origin of their group to a branch of the Abbasid Khaliphas living at Kufa around A.D. 750.<sup>26)</sup>

A host of other small places served as adjuncts to Surat. Among these were Dumas, at the mouth of the Tapi on the southern bank on the sea coast, Damka, a village about three miles north-east of Swally, Icchhawar, about half-way between Surat and Swally, Waraccha, about four miles north-east of Surat and Arajan, a village below Surat on the other side of the river. Two other places below Surat may also be mentioned here. These were Umra, ten miles short of Surat according to Thomas Best, where the flats were treacherous for navigation. The other was Bhatha, on the right bank of the Tapi, some three miles below Surat.<sup>27)</sup>

The other small towns in the vicinity of Surat were Variao, three miles north of the city on the right bank of the river, Kareli, nine miles north-east of Variao where there was a customs check point, Olpad, 12 miles north-west of Surat and a source of fresh water for sailors, and Jahangirpur, again on the right bank and a mile above Rander, which was a wayside station for caravans coming to Surat. Most of these places were closely knit with the mercantile economy of Surat. They provided a variety of services such as transport, supplies for ships and sailors or even agricultural and commercial products like cloth.<sup>28)</sup>

The general picture of Surat and its environs as given to us in our records is that of a prosperous city bustling with activity of merchants, Indian and foreign, of caravans loaded with goods arriving and departing, of *caravan sarais* filled with itinerant merchants, of some fine houses and public works such as the celebrated Gopi tank and the princess' garden and of numerous and busy artisans and workmen. Despite the pluralism of its population the city was bound together by strong economic ties and had developed both the appearance and spirit of a

thriving metropolis whose ties stretched far beyond its immediate surroundings to towns and cities hundreds of miles away. And to this hinterland we will turn in the next chapter.

## (6)

The events indelibly etched on Surat's collective memory were the periods of the great famine and Shivaji's raids. Though Surat knew of quite a few periods of scarcity the famine of 1631-1632 was the most devastating. The English, Dutch, Mughal and Gujarati accounts are full of grim and heart-rending descriptions of this calamity. An English letter of April 13, 1630 refers to the want of rains for the past three years. The English at Surat wrote to London on December 31, 1630: ". . . universal dearth over all this continent, of whose like in these parts no former age has record; the country being wholly dismantled by drought and to those that were not formerly provided no grain for either man or beast to be purchased for money, though at sevenfold the price of former times accustomed; the poor mechanics, weavers, washers, dyers, etc., abandoning their habitations in multitudes and instead of relief elsewhere have perished in the fields for want of food to sustain them". A Mughal account speaks of life being offered for a loaf "but none would buy; rank was to be sold for a cake, but none cared for it; the ever bounteous hand was stretched out for food, and the feet which had always trodden the way of contentment walked about only in search of sustenance". Peter Mundy in his journey from Surat to Agra witnessed many a scene of desolation and the ultimate in human misery; highways infested with "thieves and others. . . not so much for desire of riches as for grain etc. food", a town "half burnt up and almost void of inhabitants, the most part fled, the rest died, lying in the streets and on the tombs", a "fair" river with its water dried up, of men and women "driven to that extremity for want of food that they sold their children for 12d, 6d and pence a piece; yea, and to give them away to any that would take them, and with many thanks, that so they might preserve them alive, although they were sure never to see them again", of numbers of dead bodies "that lay scattered in and about the town" of "noisome smell", the stench of dead bodies thrown unburied into a great pit, of people "scraping on dunghills for food".<sup>29)</sup>

A Gujarati account speaks of parents fleeing, leaving children to fend for themselves, of mass migrations, of fathers and mothers selling children, those who had supped on dainties all their lives being forced to glean for bits wherever they could find and whole families and communities being destroyed.<sup>30)</sup> A Dutch account of December, 11/12, 1631 says, "And going ashore to a village called Swally, we saw there many people that perished of hunger; and whereas heretofore there were in that town 260 families, there was not remaining alive above 10 or 11 families. And as we travelled from thence to the city of Surat, many dead



bodies lay upon the highway; and where they died they must consume of themselves, being nobody that would bury them. And when we came into the city of Surat, we hardly could see any living persons, where heretofore was thousands; and there is so great a stench of dead persons that the sound people that came into the town were with the smell infected, and at the corner of the streets the dead lay 20 together, one upon the other, nobody burying them. The mortality in this town is and hath been so great that there have died above 30,000 people". Taking into account the number of people who must have fled the city and perhaps perished on the way the rate of mortality must have been frightful. The city was emptied of merchants and artisans and even in December 1631 the effects were still there for an English communication of December 9, 1631 says that "places here that have yielded 15 bales cloth made there in a day, hardly yield now three in a month". By June 1631 some rains had fallen and a report of January 24, 1632 speaks of the area being slowly "repeopled" by craftsmen beginning to return. But the famine was followed by torrential rains which "drowned and carried away all the corn and other grains" and there was pestilence which added to the people's misery. In spite of all this the Mughal government continued its wars with the Deccan powers and Shah Jahan's efforts consisted of opening a few relief kitchens.<sup>31)</sup>

Some four years later in early 1636 the English records report of a rise in cost of food-grains though the situation seemed to have eased by the middle of the year.<sup>32)</sup> The year 1644 was again a year of anxiety as were the years 1647, 1648, 1659, 1660, 1663, 1664, 1685-1686 and 1694-1695 when prices of essential commodities soared by 50% to 100% because of insufficient rain.<sup>33)</sup>

Such extraordinary calamities apart, the environment of Surat was prone to be subject to a number of sicknesses. Toward the end of the hot and dry season foreigners suffered from "hot fevers, headaches, fluxes of both kinds, boils and botches, most usual in such dry years as this (1617) hath been when the waters are drawn low and savour most of the soil, which is a blackish and sulphurous nature".<sup>34)</sup>

We have already referred to the disturbances created by the rebellious activities of Mughal princes in 1623, 1626, and 1656. The conflicts between the European traders and the Mughal Government also created commotion in Surat from time to time. A reference has already been made to Portuguese attacks on the city in the sixteenth century. In 1623 the English seized two Surat ships on the high seas and consequently there was an outcry in the city and the Governor had to arrest Englishmen at Swally and march them into Surat. After some angry negotiations the matter was settled in November of that year. In 1635 another Surat ship was taken by the English and as a result their Factory in the city was put under guard. In April 1648 the Dutch house in Surat was attacked by a band of 100 armed men who ransacked the building for three hours. The Dutch believed that such an attack could not have taken place without the connivance

of the Governor and demanded heavy compensation. At the end of July 1648 they sent a strong fleet to Surat and took Indian junks. Finally a settlement was reached whereby they were paid compensation and assured of fair treatment. But the greatest crisis arose toward the end of the century. Around 1694 an English pirate named Avory pillaged a ship owned by Abdul Gafur, the wealthy merchant of Surat, who was especially friendly with Sujaat Khan, the Governor of Surat. Abdul Gafur accused the English at Surat of complicity in the crime. An enraged crowd of merchants and other citizens marched on the English Factory incensed by the news that womenfolk on the seized Indian ship were dishonoured. The Military Commander of Surat soon marched on the English establishment with a cavalry force and imprisoned members of the Factory. The Mufti demanded immediate and condign punishment but the Governor promised that he would refer the matter to the Emperor. Soon thereafter Avory took the *Gunjsawai*, one of the pilgrim ships of the Emperor and the same Englishmen were put in prison. Aurangzeb issued orders to Europeans at Surat that they should act promptly to prevent piracies on the high seas and indemnify for losses suffered. In early 1697 the famous pirate Captain Kidd seized the ship the *Quedda Merchants* with its cargo worth some £50,000 owned by Mukalis Khan, a prominent nobleman at the court of Aurangzeb. This led to added confrontation between the English and Mughal authorities and created great commotion in the city. As the seventeenth century turned into the eighteenth, European piracy continued to be a menace to Surat shipping.<sup>35)</sup>

But the most serious challenge to Surat came from the Marathas. The Marathas had risen in rebellion against the Mughal Empire headed by Aurangzeb, under their redoubtable leader Shivaji (1627-1680). Shivaji fought both the Kingdom of Bijapur and Aurangzeb's forces resolutely and in January 1664 decided to deliver a crippling blow at Surat. On January 5 Surat received a "hot alarm" of Shivaji's approach to Gandevi and by the 6th his forces were within 16 miles of the city. An English letter of January 28, 1664 says: "This sudden surprise struck such a terror to all, both men, women and children that the Governor and the rest of the King's Ministers and eminent merchants betook themselves to the castle; which the towns folk perceiving left their houses and whatever belonging to them, and fled with their wives and children, some upon the river in vessels and boats, some to the out villages, that in a few hours the whole town was dispeopled, excepting that part of the town about us, in hopes of our protection. . . The next news was the rebel had sent two men and a letter, requiring the Governour (Inayat Khan), Haji Zahid Beg, Virji Vora and Haji Kasim, the three eminent merchants and moneyed men in the town, to come to him in person immediately and conclude with him; else he immediately threatened the whole town with fire and sword; which he presently put in practice, not receiving a present answer, and that day, being the 5th (6th ?) at night uninterrupted comes before the castle and entrench himself. . ." He was repulsed by the European

establishments but broke "open Haji Zahid's house and had one night's plunder out of it". Shivaji remained in Surat until the 12th when he left parts of the town in shambles. The reports current then were that Shivaji had taken away some two and one half millions of rupees, gold, silver, pearls, rubies, diamonds, and emeralds from the homes of Virji Vora, Haji Zahid Beg, Haji Kasim and other rich merchants sparing only the house of Mohandas Parekh, the Dutch broker, because Parekh was reputed to be a very charitable man. He also spared the Capuchin church. Aurangzeb was incensed with the inept and cowardly conduct of his Governor and dismissed him. He also ordered the city to be properly fortified and as a mark of his appreciation of the courage displayed by the Europeans remitted a part of the customs duties for them. The loss suffered by the city during the five or six days sack by Shivaji could have been about eight million rupees.<sup>36)</sup>

Six years later in October 1670 Shivaji once again sacked Surat. He arrived at Surat on October 3 and the city was open for him as the defenders fled to the Fort after a slight resistance. The Marathas pillaged homes and the *sarais*, burnt down nearly half of the town and retreated on the 5th carrying with them enormous booty. The French made their peace with Shivaji by giving him valuable presents but the English and the Dutch defended themselves well. Streynsham Master states that when Shivaji came upon Surat there were no more than 300 men to defend the town. He adds: "No sooner Sevagy was gone but the poor people of Surat fell on plundering what was left, insomuch that there was not a house great or small, excepting those which stood on their guard, which were not ransacked". Haji Zahid Beg's son, being despondent about the safety of the city, expressed a desire to move to Bombay.<sup>37)</sup>

The two daring raids carried out by Shivaji in a span of six years exposed the weaknesses of the Surat Government and the Mughal Empire. As late as 1675 Fryer noticed "remains of Shivaji's fury, the ruins being not yet repaired; of whom they stand in hourly fear, having their sores still fresh in their memory: to prevent whose rage, they are collecting an hundred thousand rupees till their walls be finished. . . .". Abbé Carré refers to the action of the City Governor in 1672 which speaks for itself. He says: "The Governor heard that many Hindus and their families were leaving the town both to avoid his extortions and from fear of an attack from King Shivaji, of which there was much talk. He had all the gates shut, and posted guards everywhere for some days, while he levied a fine of more than a million deniers. This, he said, was for the pay of the soldiers whom he had brought to defend the town against Shivaji".<sup>38)</sup> After 1670 the city was frequently disturbed either by rumours of Maratha raids or their incursions in the neighbouring territories and the Maratha rebellion continued after Shivaji's death in 1680. Under his successor Sambhaji (1680-1689) Marathas ranged up and down Western India and by 1720 under Peshwa Bajirao I (1720-1740) they were poised to annex the rich territories of Gujarat. At the turn of the century Surat's prosperi-



ty had declined seriously and though commerce continued through the first few decades of the eighteenth century the city was obviously past the prime of its glory.

## CHAPTER II

### *The People*

A recent study of urbanism points out that the urban phenomenon may be viewed as an "independent variable, and as a dependent one". The term "independent variable" is taken to mean there as "conceiving of it (the city) as containing within itself, at least in certain aspects, the major determinant of its own experience. By contrast, to conceive of the city as a dependent variable is to regard it as the resultant of the interaction of forces that are very much wider than it, that embrace the entire economy and the entire society, and indeed, it may be, the whole comity of societies". However viewed once it begins its distinctive life "the city becomes a phenomenon in its own right, within which new relationships arise that could not otherwise exist".<sup>1)</sup> The city becomes a "phenomenon in its own right" when it begins to develop its own specific community, a "genuine community" as Toynbee would call it, which while sharing some general characteristics with its parent society adds its own in terms of ways or styles of life and its values. Looking at Surat from this point of view the question naturally arises as to whether this city, in any respect, evolved such a "genuine community" within itself at all?

The impression given by European observers of seventeenth-century Surat is one of great diversity of its inhabitants. Nicholas Downton (February 1615) says of the people of Surat: "a mixt people, quiet, peaceable, very subtle; civil, and universally governed under one King, but diversely lawed and customed".<sup>2)</sup> Della Valle (1623) speaks of the people of Surat as "partly Gentiles (Hindus) and partly Mahometans; and if I am not deceived, the former are the greater number: However, they live all mixt together, and peaceably, because the Gran Moghel, to whom Gujarat is now subject (having sometimes had a distinct King) although he be a Mahometan (but not a pure one, as they report) makes no difference in his dominions between the one sort and the other...".<sup>3)</sup> This tendency to enumerate the population of Surat in terms of several distinct communities, living and working alongside of each other, is to be found in most of our European commentators. Thus Mundy (1629-1630) says, "The inhabitants of Surat are Mogolls, Banians and Parsees". Mandelslo (1638) notices that Surat was inhabited in part by Indians and in part by foreigners. Under Indians he includes Banias, Brahmans and "Moors" adding that the former two are heathens (*heydenen*) while the last are Muslims. Pieter Van Dam (seventeenth century), categorizes them as Muslims (under whom he includes natives, Persians, Tartars, Arabs and Armenians) and Hindus comprising Brahmans and Banias. Thevenot (1660s) says that Surat "is inhabited by Indians, Persians, Arabians, Turks, Franks, Armenians, and other Christians: In the meantime its usual inhabitants are reduced to three orders, amongst whom, indeed, neither the Franks nor other Christians are comprehended, because they are but in a small number in comparison of

those who profess another religion. These three sorts of inhabitants are either Moors, heathens, or Parsis; by the word Moors are understood all the Mahometans, Moguls, Persians, Arabians or Turks that are in the Indies, though they be not uniform in their religion, the one being *Sunnis* and the other *Chiaia* (Shi'as). . . The inhabitants of the second order are called Gentiles or heathens . . ." Fryer (1675), describes the people of Surat as Muslims who are divided among the four categories of Hanifis, Shafis, Hambaliyahs and Malakiyahs who though all calling themselves Muslims differ in matters of marriage. He also distinguishes between Saiyids, (wearing a green vest and a distinctive turban); *shaikhs* ("a cousin too at a distance, into which relation they admit all new made proselytes"); Moors and the rest variously called Mogul, Tartars, Pathan, Deccani, Dehli Rajputs converted to Islam, Jamatis, and "the lowest of all is Bohrah (Bohras)". Finally, Ovington (1680s), says: "I shall distinguish the natives here into three sorts. First, the Moors, or Moguls. Secondly, the Banians or ancient Gentiles. Thirdly, the Parsis or *Gaures*".<sup>4)</sup>

The picture that emerges from these statements is that of a population divided into several groups such as foreign (Persians, Arabs, Tartars) and indigenous (Sunnis and Shi'as) Muslims, Parsis, Hindus and Jains. Surat was on this reckoning more of a salad bowl than a melting pot where the various ingredients retained their distinct and separate identities even when thrown together rather than blending imperceptibly into each other. The differences noticed were obvious in their religious beliefs and practices but were also to be seen in their modes of dress and dwelling, food-habits and entertainments, attitudes and values. The Muslims could have been expected to be more cohesive in their social grouping because of their religion but differences of race persisted and the split between Sunnis and Shi'as was as real as was the difference between the Persian and Indian Muslim though all of them prayed to the same Allah and were people of the same Book, the *Quran*. The Hindus were grouped into two major divisions, the Brahmans and the Banias, but there were also other groups as will be noticed below.

## (2)

Islam was introduced into Gujarat in the seventh century A.D. The first Arab raid came in 635 when the Governor of Bahrain sent an expedition against Broach. Then through the centuries colonies of Arab and Persian merchants began sprouting in the port cities of Gujarat such as Cambay, Broach and Surat. With the establishment of Muslim rule in the region Islam received a strong impetus and numerous converts were made from among the Hindus. During the closing years of the fifteenth century the Mahadwi movement was introduced into Gujarat by Sayyid Muhammad (1443-1505) and his followers and it made a large number of converts.<sup>5)</sup>

The social origins of the Muslim population made for more or less exclusive groupings among them. Both under the Gujarat Sultans and the Mughals the Sunnis enjoyed a prestige and power that were generally denied to the Shi'as, and especially the Bohras, who were persecuted during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Among the Sunnis also there were conspicuous differences indicative of hierarchical class relations. The members of the governmental bureaucracy claimed the status of nobility while the Muslim merchants tended to develop into a separate class, favoured by the bureaucracy against the Hindus.

Ovington comments upon the favoured position of the Muslims: "To treat briefly of the Moors, who are allowed a precedence to all the rest, because of their religion, which is the same as that of their Prince, and for this reason they are advanced to the most eminent stations of honour and trust; are appointed governors of provinces, and are intrusted with the principal military, as well as civil employments. Very few of the Gentiles being called to any considerable trust, or encouraged any more, than just to follow their several manual occupations, or merchandize. . . Therefore the Gentiles are little esteemed of by the Mogul, and condemned by the Moors and often treated with inhumanity and neglect, because of their adhesion to the principles of a religion, which is different from that of the state. And yet their peaceable submissive deportment wins mightily upon the Moors and takes off much of that scornful antipathy which they harbour against them".<sup>6</sup> Fryer calls the ruling class of Muslims "grave and haughty in their demeanour" and "their chiefest delight and pride is to be seen smoking tobacco cross-legged in a great chair at their doors, out of a long brass pipe adapted to a large crystal *Hubble-Bubble (hukkah)*, fixed in a brass frame, their menial servants surrounding them". He further states: "the Moors are by nature plagued with jealousy, cloistering their wives up, and sequestering them the sight of any besides the *Capon* that watches them. When they go abroad, they are carried in close palankeens (*palkhi*), which if a man offer to unveil it is present death; the meanest of them not permitting their women to stir out uncovered; of whom they are allowed as many as they can keep". In their food habits they ate "highly of all flesh *dumpoked* (steamed) which is baked with spice in butter; *pulloo (pilaf)*, a stew of rice and butter, with flesh, fowl or fish; fruits, *achars (chutneys)* or pickles, and sweetmeats" and drink coffee, smoke tobacco, chew *pan* (leaf of the betel vine garnished with lime=*chunam*, kathaew, areca nut, cardamom and clove) "which makes a fragrant breath, and gives a rare vermilion to the lips" and liberally splash themselves with rose-water. They also scent themselves with "essence of sandal and oranges, very costly, and exquisitely extracted. They drink no wine publicly, but privately will be good fellows, not content with such little glasses as we drink out of, nor Claret or Rhenish (which they call vinegar) but Sack and Brandy out of the bottle they will tipple, till they are well warmed".<sup>7</sup> Thevenot adds an interesting note to the subject of 'vinegar': "The strong-water of this country is no better than the wine, that which is

commonly drunk, is made of *Jagre* or black sugar put into water with the bark of the tree *Baboul*, to give it some force; then all are distilled together. They make a strong water also of *Tary* (*Toddy*) which they distil; but these strong waters are nothing so good as our Brandy, no more than those they draw from rice, sugar and dates. The Vinegar they use is also made of *Jagre* infused in water. There are some that put spoilt-raisins in it when they have any; but to make it better, they mingle *Tary* with it, and set it for several days in the sun." Alexander Hamilton refers to the Hali's sect among the Muslims, another is called Musey by him as "those who observe Moses' Law as well as the Alcoran, and another sect called Molacks (Maliks?), who observe some ancient heathenish customs and feasts; but all the others reckon them Heretics. They have a yearly feast, but the time of its celebration is known only to themselves, wherein, after much mirth and jollity, each sex withdraws to a room, the women tak<sup>g</sup> each an handkerchief, (or some such sign, that may be again known) and go in the dark promiscuously among the men, and without speaking, lie down together on mats or carpets spread for that purpose, and enjoy one another's company some hours, then withdraw to their own room, leaving their signals with their bedfellows, who know whom they have been caressed by; but very often they find incestuous embraces, which at that feast are only lawful. Aurangzeb made it death to be found at those meetings, yet that execrable rite is till continued and practised. And Abdul Gafur, the rich merchant afore mentioned, was a disciple of that sect". Foster in his notes on Hamilton's account states that Maliks were "Hindus converted to Islam". The sex rite mentioned above seems to have been a part of the Shakta sect ritual (among the five "m"s enjoined were wine or liquor, meat, fish, parched grain and sexual congress). If what Hamilton has to say about this is based on facts then it may indicate a survival of aspects of the Shakta ritual among some of the Muslims recently converted from among the Hindus.<sup>8)</sup>

Of their dress Della Valle has an interesting description. People usually wore garments of fine cotton cloth, generally white in colour. "The garment which they wear next to the skin serves both for coat and shirt, from the girdle upwards being adorned upon the breast, and hanging down in many folds to the middle of the leg. Under this cassack, from the girdle downwards, they wear a pair of long drawers of the same cloth, which cover not only their thighs, but legs also to the feet; and 'tis a piece of gallantry to have it wrinkled in many folds upon the legs. The naked feet are not otherwise confined but to a slipper, and that easy to be pulled off without the help of the hand; this mode being convenient, in regard of the heat of the country and the frequent use of standing and walking upon tapistry in their chambers". While the Hindus wore their hair moderately long the Muslim "who shave it, is bound up in a small and very neat turbant, of almost a quadrangular form, a little long, and flat on the top. They who go most gallant, use to wear their turbant only striped with silk of several colours upon the white, and sometimes with gold; and likewise their girdles wrought in silk and gold, instead of plain white"

Of the dress of the women, those "of the Mogholsians, and soldiers of other extraneous descents, who yet are here esteemed, go clad likewise all in white, either plain, or wrought with gold-flowers, of which work there are some very goodly and fine pieces. Their upper garment is short, more becoming a man than a woman, and much of the same shape with those of men: sometimes they wear a turban too upon their heads, like men, coloured, and wrought with gold: sometimes they wear only fillets, either white or red, or wrought with gold and silver, for other colours they have little use. Likewise their clothes are oftentimes red, of the same rich and fine linnen; and their drawers are also either white or red, and oftentimes of sundry sorts of silkstuffs striped with all sorts of colours".<sup>9)</sup> Fryer adds that men among the Muslim nobility carried a "poniard or *catarre* (*katar*, dagger) at their girdle; as they are neat in apparel, as they are grave in their carriage". Of the Muslim women, they "wear the breeches, but in most servile condition; yet they have their ornaments of head, with bracelets of pearl, ear-rings and nose-rings, to which they hang jewels, mostly set in silver, because gold is *nigess* (*najis*), or unclean".

Alexander Hamilton's comments on the dress of the Muslims are also worth quoting here. He says "The Mahometan women go always veiled when they appear abroad. Their garments differ but little from the man's. Their coats, which also serve for both sexes for shirts, are close bodied. The men's are gathered in plats below the navel, to make them seem long waisted, and the womens are gathered a pretty way above, to make their waist seem short. They both wear breeches to the ankle. The men wear only silver rings on their fingers, and generally but one for a signet. The women wear gold rings on their fingers, and sometimes one on their thumbs, with a small looking-glass set in it, and often they wear gold rings in their noses and ears. The Gentiles again permit their women to appear bare-faced, and their legs bare to the knee. They wear gold or silver rings, according to their ability, one in their nose, and several small ones in holes bored round the rim of the ear, with one large and heavy in each lappet. They also wear rings on their toes, and shekels on their legs, of the aforesaid metals, made hollow, and some glass beads loose in them, that when they move the leg they make a noise like a rattle snake. The men wear gold rings in their ears, and often three or four in a cluster, hanging at the lappet. Some have a pearl set in them". The flaps of the shirts were gathered in front with the Muslims tying them on the left while the Hindus had them on the right side.<sup>10)</sup>

In their religious observances they were generally punctilious "observers of prayer". The two great personal religious occasions in life were the ceremony of circumcision "performed by a barber, at eight years of age, with feasting, and carrying the boy about in pomp, with music and great expressions of joy. Of the girls they make small account, they being instructed within doors how to pray". The other great occasion was that of marriage performed by the *Qazi*. This is a "time of solemnity sometimes kept for several weeks together with illuminations



on their houses, their garments tintured with saffron, riding triumphantly through the streets with trumpets and kettle drums; fetching the bride from her kindred and they sending banquets, household-stuff, and slaves their attendants, with a great train through their streets, which is all their dowry". The easy accessibility of divorce is commented upon by Fryer thus, "but the *Cazy* has a knack beyond those couplers of Europe, he can loose the knot when they plead a divorce. They have four wives if they can maintain them, and as many other women as they please; she that bears the first son is reckoned the chief". He says that the Muslims seldom used the services of a midwife during childbirth, "though there are not a few live well by that profession; known by tufts of silk on their shoes or slippers, all other women wearing them plain". The period of "quarantine" was forty days after which they were given a bath and "the child, without much ceremony, is named by the parents".<sup>11)</sup>

On the subject of slaves Della Valle states that "of slaves there is a numerous company, and they live with nothing; their clothing is only white linnen, which though fine is bought very cheap; and their diet for the most part is nothing but rice. . . of which they have infinite plenty, and a little fish, which is found everywhere in abundance".<sup>12)</sup> The Muslim nobility owned numerous slaves in their residences and harems and many of these were Africans brought from the east coast, especially Mozambique and Madagascar. The Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and English brought African slaves into India from time to time. Most of these were used either as bodyguards or domestic servants.<sup>13)</sup>

The principal diversions were taking "the air, either in palanquins or otherwise, they usually frequent the coolest groves, and the plesant gardens adjacent to the city refreshed either by the river *Tappy*, or water conveyed into their tanks, or ponds. And here the dancing wenches, or Quenchenies (*Kanchani*), entertain you, if you please, with their sprightly motions, and soft charming aspects, with such amorous glances, and so taking irresistable a mien, as they cannot but gain an admiration from all, so they frequently captivate a zealous rich spectator, and make their fortunes and booty of the enchanted admirer". These dancing girls "were educated in the improvement of all that is gay and entertaining, they set themselves off with such advantage, by a rhetorical look and taking air, wherein they show an unparalleled master-piece of art". Ovington mentions the famous rope-trick as one of the strange shows along with magic tricks, dancing snakes, wrestling and acrobatics as other forms of entertainment. The nobility also showed great zest for hunting wild animals found around Surat and often used trained dogs or hawks in the chase.

The Surat Mughal nobility had a particular fascination for the European hunting dogs, "Spaniels, Greyhounds or Mastiffs. A water-Spaniel, in the river *Tappy* after a duck, will call forth the whole city to the pastime". Hunting deer with the aid of a trained leopard was also very popular. One of the methods of hunting is described by Ovington thus: "Sometimes a great company of men

range the fields, and walk together into the enclosures, to look after their game; when once they have espied the place where they fancy the game lies, they enclose the ground, and stand in a ring, with clubs or weapons in their hands, whilst they employ others to beat up the ground, and raise it for them". In the place of stalking horses there were oxen trained to stalk and Ovington reports: "I have seen a Moor Indian shoot at once five or six ducks under one of their bellies, without the least starting, or surprisal to the ox".<sup>14)</sup>

The language of common parlance was "Hindustani. . . which is a mixture of Persian and Slavonian" but the court language was Persian "which obtains with all the Honourable *Omrahs*, and with all persons of ingenuity and polite conversation through the Empire, which creates an ambition of dressing their speech as well as writing in that favourite style". Paper had come into common use and that used ordinarily was glossy and smooth. Ahmadabad was well-known centre of paper-manufacture and European paper was also much in demand. When communications were written to the court paper gilt "all on the surface. . . with small flowers interspersed here and there for ornament" was used. The writing instrument was the bamboo reed and "for the security of letters sent abroad to the principal ministers, or the Emperor, they are enclosed in a large hollowed Bambou of a foot length, at one end of which is a head or cover two inches long, which after the letter is put in, is joined close to the Bambou, and upon that joining the seal is fixed". The engraved seals had characters "generally those of their name, upon the gold, or silver, or Cornelian stones". Persian literature was studied avidly and it was considered a mark of sophistication to intersperse one's speech with quotations from Persian poetry.<sup>15)</sup>

As in weddings a great deal of money was also spent on funerals. Ovington states that sometimes the amount spent was "enough almost to sink a rich fortune". Expensive tombs were raised over the graves and a yearly feast was given "in honour of the departed". The tomb was decorated with lamps and "beset with bright illuminations" on the anniversary of the day of death.<sup>16)</sup>

The fast of *Ramazan* (ninth month of the lunar year) was observed rigidly and with "avowed abstinence. . . during which time they are so severely abstemious, that they stretch not their hands to either bread or water, 'till the sun be set, and the stars appear; no, not the youths of 12 or 13 years of age. Which make the penance so much the more rigorous and troublesome. . ." At the end of the fasting period "when, all malice apart, the Moors embrace one another, and at the sight thereof (the New Moon) make a jubilee, by firing of guns, blowing of trumpets, feasting and praying very devoutly." The Governor then proceeded in a grand procession, distributing gifts along the way, accompanied by cavalry and elephants and followed by Mullahs and officers such as the Shah Bunder and the Mint Master, to the place of prayer. Fryer also refers to the celebration of the Muharram, lamenting the death of Hasan and Hussain when *Tazias* were carried in procession after ten days' mourning. This was the custom



among the Shi'as especially and Aurangzeb issued orders against such processions. Fryer also mentions the custom among the Muslims when "on an eclipse of the sun or moon, the Moors are in a lamentable plight, making a great noise with pots and pans, and other noisy instruments; not omitting their prayers, fancying them prevalent to deliver them from their travel". This shows that Muslims had been deeply influenced by some of the customs of the Hindus who usually made a din at such eclipses.<sup>17)</sup>

The theologians (*ulama, mulla*) enjoyed a position of respect among the Muslims. The office of the *Mufti* or Ecclesiastical officer has been mentioned and there was also an officer called *Sadr* whose task it was to supervise the distribution of Muslim charities and maintain the mosques and institutions of learning attached to them in good repair. Very often indigent pilgrims wishing to go to Mecca and Medina received state support and such a pilgrimage was always looked upon as a mark of high religious significance and status.

Likewise the *Faqirs* (holy men) enjoyed great respect, latitude and generosity. They were "abstracted from the world, and resigned to God" and practised penance of various kinds. One "vowed to hang by the heels, till he got money enough to build a mosque. . . that he may be held a saint. Another shall travel the country with an horn blown before him, and an ox it may be to carry him and his baggage, besides one to wait on him with a peacock's tail; whilst he rattles a great iron chain fettered to his foot, as big as those elephants are foot-locked with, some two yards in length, every link thicker than a man's thumb and a palm in length. . ." Bernier too refers to the *faqirs* and their various vows and in these descriptions there seems to be a great deal of confusion between the Muslim *faqirs* and the Hindu *jogis*.<sup>18)</sup>

The members of the Muslim nobility thus lived a life of opulence and conspicuous consumption, a privileged class set high above the run of ordinary humanity. But in spite of its power and wealth this class suffered from a sense of constant insecurity which made itself manifest in patterns of attitudes and behaviour that were one of arrogance toward those under their charge and importunate subservience toward superiors in Ahmadabad or Agra. The tenure of their office was always subject to sudden shifts of imperial favour and most of the time they were more affected by the turn of court politics than the vicissitudes of fortune for people whom they governed.

Through the seventeenth century a significant class of Muslim merchants had also grown in Surat. In a later chapter we will have occasion to deal with some of the leaders of this Muslim trading community. These Muslims traded with Persia, Arabia, Malabar, Ceylon, Malaya, Sumatra and Java. Many of them owned a number of large ships and some, such as Zahid Beg and Khwaja Minaz, occupied positions of eminence in the civic life of Surat. Though they were more privileged than their Hindu counterparts they too were subject to bureaucratic

cupidity and wrath. Business interests created a natural bond between them and the Banias and very often we see them uniting with the Banias to safeguard their economic rights. Many worked in close cooperation with other great merchants like Virji Vora and quite a few of them worked as money-lenders, the Islamic injunctions against usury notwithstanding.

The Bohras (Isma'ilis) were the most prominent among the Muslim merchant community of Surat and Gujarat. Being persecuted for their religious beliefs and practices by the Sunni rulers of the area and being "gradually squeezed out of its traditional avocations by a hostile political regime" the Bohras became rapidly urbanised and the community tended "to the diversion of more and more people towards commerce" in which they soon established their skills and leadership.<sup>19)</sup>

Farmers, artisans and servants of various sorts from among the Muslims generally came from those who were converted from the local Indian castes. They were indistinguishable from others of similar vocations and status. Their only claim to distinction was their religion which, however, helped them little against their 'lowly' social origins. They were as much subject to bureaucratic oppression and economic exploitation as were the peasants and artisans among the Hindus and their general life-style, except in religious matters, differed but little from the life-style of their class among the other communities. In spite of their equalitarian claim the Muslims in India were always conscious of racial and social distinctions and discrimination on those grounds did exist. Fryer points out that Muslims will eat together regardless of social distinctions and of course pray together but "only some punctilios in respect of marriage remain yet undecided; as for an Hanifi to offer his daughter to a Shaffi, is a great shame".<sup>20)</sup>

(3)

The Hindus formed the great majority of the people of Surat. The Hindus are often called "Gentiles or Heathen", divided broadly into Brahmans and Banias.<sup>21)</sup> The Dutch factor W. Geleynssen De Jongh who was in the Burhanpur-Broach area from 1623 to 1632 refers to the Vaishnavas and Smartas among the Banias in Gujarat and presumably the same sectarian differences existed in Surat.<sup>22)</sup> But such differences were far less clear-cut or mutually exclusive in Gujarat and northern India than they were in the south. Manucci draws our attention to the tenacity with which the Hindus clung to their religious beliefs and practices and adds: "it is impossible to convert (them) to any other religion".<sup>23)</sup> Such devotion and fidelity were secured by the Hindu's own sense of satisfaction with his religious beliefs and the role and position of the Brahman in Hindu society. Della Valle refers to the esteem in which the Brahmans were held as they were "dedicated wholly to learning and the service of temples" and regarded as the "most noble of all". He describes the sacred thread worn by them which he

calls "a fillet of three braids, which they put next the flesh like a neck-chain, passing from the left shoulder under the right arm, and so round".<sup>24)</sup> They performed the religious rites for the Banias and other Hindus and were present in large numbers at Phulpara, one of Surat's suburbs on the river, where Hindu funerals were performed. Fryer describes them, "in the river doing their devotions, which consists in washing and praying". He then goes on to say: "The elder sat in a row, where the men and women came down together to wash, having *lungies* about their waists only, which before they put on, they select a Brahman of their proper caste to hold their vest; which they shift so cleverly, that the quickest eye can discover nothing more decent. At their coming up out of the water they bestow their largess of rice or *dahl* (an Indian bean) and the Brahman his benediction, by impressing a mark answerable to the castes on their foreheads; which is the way they live, purely on benevolence". Fryer also says that some Brahmans practised medicine but not surgery, which was the work of barbers. There is also a reference to one Adhar Bhatt who was called the Banian Doctor. He was engaged in commercial transactions and these references would indicate that though the majority of the Brahmans performed religious services as their vocation there were others who branched out into other professions also.<sup>25)</sup> Some of the Brahmans, according to Ovington, had "abundance of wealth". Most could make astrological predictions and priests were constantly in demand for performing various religious ceremonies pertaining to naming of the child, weddings and funerals as well as ceremonies performed on death anniversaries. Many of them had only a smattering of Sanskrit. Ovington speaks of books which were "long scrolls of paper, sometimes ten foot in length, and a foot broad, sowed together at the upper end, as many long sheets as the occasion of the writing requires. The pen they write with is the ancient *calmus*, or reed, about the thickness of a large quill. And some of their standishes (inkstands) are made long and square, and above an inch broad, and of sufficient length to contain both pens and a place for ink". What Ovington is referring to is obviously the *chopda* used both for religious texts and ordinary writing.<sup>26)</sup> The education imparted by the Brahmans, presumably to children of the higher castes, was of a general nature involving learning by rote parts of selected texts. For the artisan castes occupational training was given in the family as most occupations were hereditary in nature. Fryer mentions the pedagogue "who teaches the children first their letters or cyphers on the ground, by writing on the dust with fingers, which is their primer; where when they are perfect, they are allowed a board plastered over which with cotton they wipe out, when full, as we do from slates or table-books; when they arrive to paper, they are presumed to be their crafts-masters, and to earn it".<sup>27)</sup> For the Bania, however, proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic formed the basic tools of his trade. Most European observers have commented upon the uncanny ability of the Bania to do complicated sums quickly and accurately by mental calculation. Ovington says: "The Bania, by the strength of his brain only, will sum up his accounts with equal exactness, and quicker

dispatch, than the readiest arithmetician can with his pen". In other trades Indians displayed "matchless ingenuity in their several employments, and admirable mimics of whatever they affect to copy after", so that "weavers of silk will exactly imitate the nicest and most beautiful patterns that are brought from Europe. And the very ship-carpenters at Surat will take the model of any English vessel, in all the curiosity of its building, and the most artificial instances of workmanship about it, whether they are proper for the convenience of the burthen, or of quick sailing, as exactly as if they had been the first contrivers. . . . The tailors here fashion the cloathes for the Europeans, either men or women, according to every mode that prevails; and fit up the commodoes, and towering head-dresses for the women, with as much skill, as if they had been an Indian fashion, or themselves had been apprentices at the Royal Exchange."<sup>28)</sup>

The Hindu counterparts of the Muslim *faqirs* were the *jogis* and Surat had a fair number of them. They practised assorted varieties of ascetical modes and were very highly venerated by their devotees who liberally supported them. From time to time some Banias also undertook the long journey on a pilgrimage to Banaras and other Hindu holy places. Their religious beliefs and rituals, the influence of the Brahmans and the force of custom made for very strong loyalty to religion.<sup>29)</sup>

Surat also had numerous members of the Jain community. One of the foremost of merchants was a Jain, namely Virji Vora, who belonged to the Lonkagacchiya Sthanakāvasi group. There were numerous Jain temples on which the community lavished great wealth. The *Indudutam* describes their glistening marble forms and the crowds of *sadhus* and *sadhvis* and their lay-supporters vying with each other in learning, scholarship and liberality. Geleynssen De Jongh refers to them as the *Shravaks* who held every living being sacred, observed a strict vegetarian diet and fasted rigorously on every prescribed day. They fed animals with touching care and maintained hospices for aged or maimed animals and birds. The Banias too were much influenced by the Jainistic modes in diet and devotion to the welfare of birds and animals and the two communities lived in harmony alongside of each other forming, in their occupational pursuits, a united and prosperous mercantile community.<sup>30)</sup>

The Parsis were another religious group among the population of Surat. Mundy speaks of them in 1633 thus: "Parsees are only found about Surat, who neither bury nor burn their dead" but dispose of them in the Tower of Silence. He refers to their fire-temples and adds that they came "first out of Persia (A.D. 717), leaving their country because they would not leave their religion at the coming up of Mahometisme. And there are also those that manure (cultivate) the Toddy trees at Surat etc. . . ." Thevenot likewise refers to them as inhabitants of Surat who originally lived in Persia at the time of Caliph Omar. De Jongh states that the Parsis in the early seventeenth century followed diverse occupations such as trade, shop-keeping, crafts and trades involving manual work. Manucci refers

to the history of their migration from Persia and the asylum given them by the Hindu rulers of the western coast in Gujarat, adding: "They came to Surat, where unto this day there are numbers of them, as also in different villages, and in the Portuguese territory adjacent to Damao (Daman)". Manucci then makes a curious observation that "these people have made a vow never to go upon the sea, in order not to defile it, since the sea infallingly induces vomiting; and in gratitude for the benefits it has done to them they hold it in this great respect". This is erroneous for we find Parsi merchants frequenting the coastal ports and part of Southeast Asia. Fryer refers to their great temple at Navsari. He adds: "These are somewhat whiter, and, I think, nastier than the Gentoos, and live, as they do, all of a family together; as if the father be living, then all the sons that are married, and men grown, with their wives and children, house it with the father, and have a portion of his stock; if he die, or be absent, the eldest brother has the respect of the father shewn, and so successively; they all rising up at his appearance, and sit not till he be seated. These are rather husbandmen than merchants, not caring to stir abroad; they supply the Marine with carts drawn by oxen, the ships with wood and water; the latter of which is excellent, drawn out of a well at old Swally. . ." Ovington also has a long description of the Parsis and their customs among which he mentions respect for the cock as one. He says: "The cock therefore, is as much esteemed by them, as the cow is by the Banians, of the lives of both which, they are the zealous patrons and protectors". He refers to their worship of fire and that "they dedicate the first day of every month, in a solemn observance of his (Supreme Being) worship". He goes on to say: "At their solemn festivals, whither an hundred or two sometimes resort, in the suburbs of the city, each man according to his fancy and ability, brings with him his victuals, which is equally distributed, and eaten in common by all that are present. For they shew a firm affection to all of their own sentiments in religion, assist the poor, and are very ready for the sustenance and comfort of such as want it. Their universal kindness, either in employing such as are needy and able to work, or bestowing a seasonable bounteous charity to such as are infirm and miserable; leaves no man destitute of relief, nor suffer a beggar in all their tribe. . ."

"In all their callings they are very industrious and diligent and careful to train up their children to arts and labour. They are the principal men at the loom in all the country, and most of the silks and stuffs at Surat are made by their hands". In many of their customs they were deeply influenced by the Hindus, and though not as "abstemious in their diet as the Banians, but superstitiously refuse to drink after any stranger, out of the same cup". From these descriptions it seems that the Parsis had not yet established their place in commerce as much as they did on their migration to Bombay toward the end of the century.<sup>31)</sup>

Finally mention may be made here of the Armenians in Surat. For centuries the Armenians had been trading in Persia, India and parts of Southeast Asia. In India they were to be found in Agra, Lucknow, Patna, Bengal, Burhanpur, Sironj,



Ahmadabad, Broach, Surat, Golkonda, Masulipatam and Madras. Mundy has an account of an Armenian who was one of Akbar's judges in the Mughal empire. The Armenians dressed like Indians and were often known by Muslim names and many of them were converts to Islam. Della Valle mentions that many Dutchmen in India took Armenian wives. There was a large number of Armenians in Surat where they had their own garden and a *caravansarai*. Fryer narrates a story of an Armenian who was flogged by the Governor of Surat for selling wine. One of the leading merchants of Surat was an Armenian, Khwaja Minaz, who was beaten with shoes by Ghiyas-ud-din, the Governor of Surat during 1672-1677 and later many Armenians of Surat expressed a desire to migrate to Bombay. Ovington describes them as "civil and industrious, their language is one of the most general in all Asia, and they have spread themselves in vast colonies very far, in Anatolia, Persia, the Holy Land, Egypt, Russia, and Polonia, and range by private persons and families, like Jews into all parts, and like them are as subtle and diligent in their traffic. For they have always had a celebrated name for merchandise. . .<sup>32)</sup>

## (4)

The most easily 'visible' of the social groups in Surat was that of the Baniyas. Most of our European observers mention them as being the most numerous among the Hindus. Among the rich people, of whom proportionately there were many more in Surat than in other towns of that size, some of the richest were Baniyas, the leader among them being Virji Vora, "reckoned to be worth at least eight million" by Thevenot.<sup>33)</sup> The Baniyas were also the most praised and denigrated of the city's people. They are generally described as very intelligent, polite in their address, obsequious in their manners, simple in their living, industrious in their work and single-minded in their pursuit of wealth. Manucci says that they ate "neither flesh nor fish, and only consume grain, vegetables, milk, and a great deal of butter" and by nature "are very timid, and object to carry arms. This is why they do not keep any weapons in their houses, neither a knife nor other implement by which injury can be inflicted". Fryer, who was especially prejudiced against the Parsis and the Baniyas, calls them a species of "vermin. . . that hang like horse-leeches, till they have sucked both sanguinem & succum (I mean money) from you: as soon as you have set your foot on shore, they crowd in their services, interposing between you and all civil respect, as if you had no other business but to be gulled; so that unless you have some to make your way through them, they will interrupt your going, and never leave till they have drawn out something for their advantage". But he admits, however reluctantly, that "without these neither you nor the natives themselves shall do any business". He then goes on to heap all the pejoratives he can command calling them "map of sordidness, faring hardly, and professing fairly, to entrap the unwary. . . expert in all the studied arts of thriving and insinuation; so that, lying, dissembling, cheating, are

their masterpiece: their whole desire is to have money pass through their fingers to which a great part is sure to stick". Ovington, though a little more sophisticated, is only a little less biting. He calls them "the most noted inhabitants at Surat, who are merchants all by profession, and very numerous in all parts of India. They are most innocent and obsequious, humble and patient to a miracle; sometimes they are heated into harsh expressions to one another, which is seldom; and this tongue-tempest is termed there a Banian fight, for it never rises to blows or blood-shed". He goes on: "they are mainly addicted to prosecute their temporal interest, and the amassing of treasure; and will therefore fly at the securing of a pice, though they can command whole lakhs of Roupies. I know those among them computed to be worth an hundred thousand pounds, whose service the prospect of sixpence advantage will command to traverse the whole city of Surat. For they are always upon the thoughts of increasing their wealth, and plodding for gain, which they lay hold of upon the least occasion, though by never so minute and inconsiderable advantages. By which diligence they generally secure a comfortable subsistence; and some of them amass a prodigious treasure".<sup>34)</sup>

In their speech they are always described as polite but non-committal to the point of evasion. A few such observations are worth quoting here as shedding light on the Bania's behaviour patterns. Manucci says that "it is their habit to dissemble even when someone asks them what day it is (they are, however, much more ready to answer if you talk business). They give a useless answer; but if the questioner insists on a reply, they say first of all that they do not know. After that, if he still demands a direct answer, they say (for example): 'Do you not know that to-morrow is Saturday?' And if the inquirer persists, they answer with hesitation: 'Everybody says that today is Friday'". Streynsham Master recounts two episodes. He states: "There was a great man and Governour who once, discoursing on religion, demanded of a chief Banian in the town which religion he thought was the true and best? The Banian replied he could not tell and when the Governor insisted on a reply the Banian asked for some time to consider it. The Governor gave him as much time as he asked for and in the meanwhile the Banian thought furiously on how best to avoid a direct reply. When the Governor sent for him again for his reply the Banian answered, 'Pardon it, here it is,' setting down before him a round earthen pot like a globe, with lines drawn upon it from the bottom all centering in the top. The Prince asked what that meant. The Banian replied, 'This pot may represent to you the world and the people or inhabitants therein, and these lines drawn upon it are to signify the several religions and ways that there are to go to heaven, some going one way some another, but all meet in Heaven' ". This kind of tolerance was, of course, generally unknown to votaries of other creeds in India of those days and what could be called today as broad-mindedness was then denounced as evasion and confused thinking. On another occasion a Banian was asked by a Prince how far

it was from that town to the next. The Bania evaded a direct reply fearing some design and put the same question to another bystander. When the Prince repeated the question the other man answered "aloud and positive" and then the Bania said "You have heard what that person says".<sup>35)</sup>

In his everyday living the Bania displayed utter simplicity. He generally dressed in simple white garments, a *dhoti* and a shirt that reached down to the knees in length called *caba* by Ovington and explained as "outward coats, somewhat like our frocks, turning over their breasts as far as the shoulders, and from thence tied with strings down to the middle; with a Pugarrie, or turbant upon their heads". Where the 'Moor' tied his *caba* always on the right, the Banias tied theirs on the left. His food generally consisted of rice, wheat and *bajra* and he loved yogurt (*dahi*) which was eaten at noon and was "sweet milk turned thick, mixed with boiled rice and sugar". Tea and coffee had become popular beverages then and various fruits such as grapes, oranges and mangoes were also very popular. "When any European is invited by a Banian to a collation, the repast is little else but variety of sweet-meats laid upon the green leaves of trees (banana leaves), which after the entertainment are thrown away. Sometimes a dish or two of rice-spiced Palau may come in to make up a complete banquet. Sherbert, that is wine, water, and lemon; this the best drink they indulge themselves, or allow others commonly to partake of. For wine they abominate as well as flesh. . ."<sup>36)</sup> Chewing of *pan* was a universal custom.

The Bania houses were simple structures of brick, lime and timber roofed over with half-round tiles. They are generally described as crowded and lacking in elegance. Much wealth was expended on providing jewelry for the women who preferred the colour red for their *saris* over others and did not veil themselves at all. They were very strict about fasting on two days in the month "about our ninth and twenty-fourth" according to Ovington (may be the *ekadashi* and the *shivaratri*). They were generous in their support of their temples and holy men and attended recitations from the *Epics* and the *Puranas* very religiously. They were especially kind to animals, birds and the destitute among men. The *Holi* (Spring festival in March) and the *Diwali* (Festival of Lights during October-November) were the two great festivals. In their personal habits they were very clean "constant in their washings, either in the river Tappy, which runs by the walls of Surat, or in their own houses before they stir abroad".<sup>37)</sup>

Their veneration for the cow has been commented upon by all of our European observers. They observed the dietary rules of their caste very strictly and "lest some unclean hand should have touched what is sold already cooked in the shops or the bazar, he seldom buys any from thence, but eats what is dressed only by his own domestics". They generally enjoyed good health and were "as comely and proportionable as other people". They were quick and nimble in their thinking, and trained by their religious beliefs passed "as cheerfully into the invisible world, as they would take a journey from their own kingdom to another country". They cremated their dead and Phulpara was the place where these



cremations took place.

Their women were treated with consideration and respect and their "main cost" was expended upon the women who "ambitiously affect a gaiety in their dress and cloathing. Jewels and ornaments are the very joy of their hearts, (as they usually call them) with which they are decked from the crown of their head to the very feet. Their toes are adorned with rings, and their legs with sackles of gold, or silver, or some other metal, which are sometimes above two inches in diameter, wreathed and hollow". Then there were the rings and armlets, bangles and necklaces of diverse shapes. They were married early in life and had little by way of city diversions. The weddings entailed great expenditures. The naming ceremony for the child was performed "about ten days" after birth with Brahmans present and the father's sister had the right of pronouncing the name of the baby: *Sati* (immolation of the widow on her husband's funeral pyre) was practised in some cases.<sup>39)</sup>

The Banias affected little the sports and games of the field. They played "chess or tables" which must have been the game of *pachisi*. But they were great travellers and in the pursuit of trade travelled as far as Agra, and Banias were also to be seen engaged in commerce in Goa, the Coromandel coast, Ormuz and other spots in Persia, Diu and Dabhol.<sup>39)</sup>

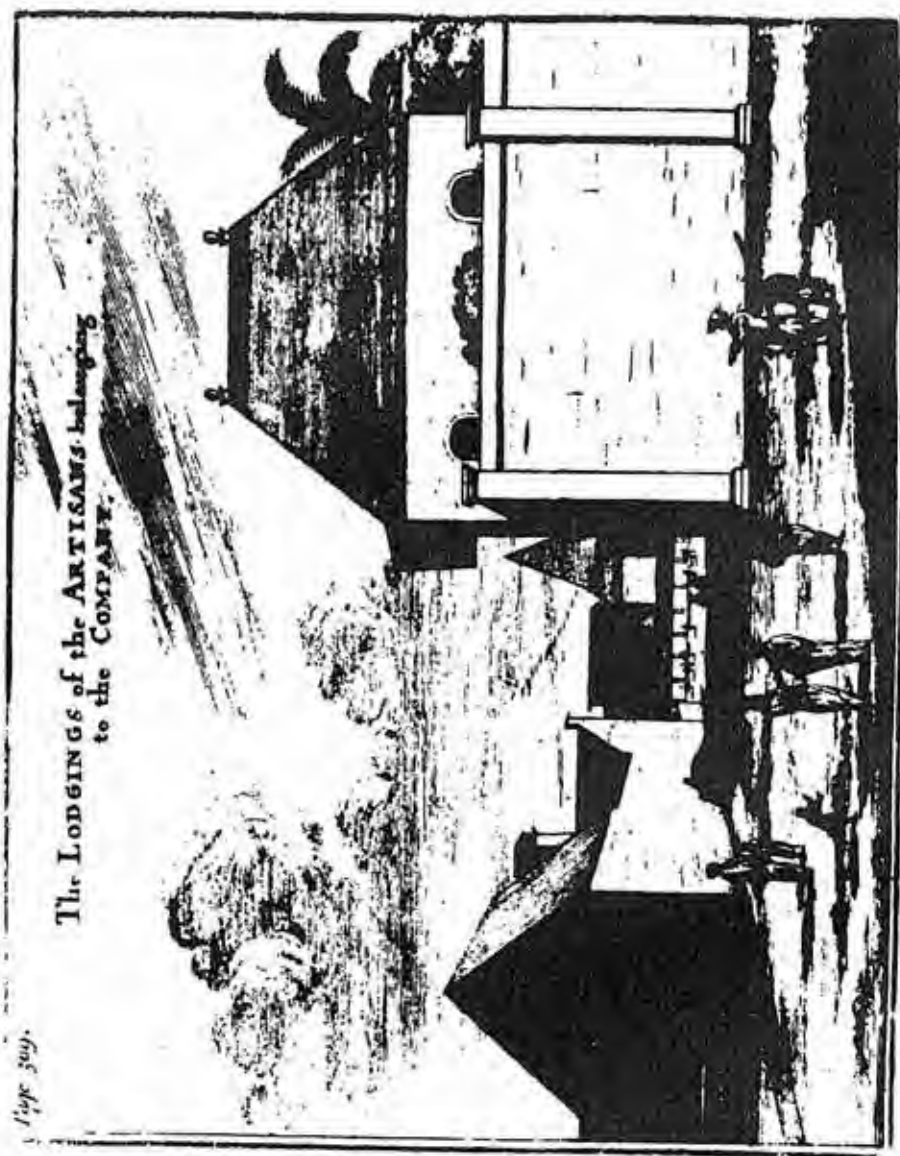
Ovington mentions that "among the Banians are reckoned 24 castes, or sects, who both refrain from an indiscriminate mixture in marriages, and from eating together in common". It is true that the Banias were divided into several sub-castes based on region and though marriages were restricted to the specific sub-caste it is doubtful if these sub-castes were prevented from dining with each other. Their major vocation was trade which ranged in scope from small shopkeepers to prominent brokers, bankers, money-changers (*shroff*) and merchant princes.<sup>40)</sup> Most Banias, however, were small traders and even pedlars, some of whom set up their own shops in a special bazaar on the sands at Swally whenever European ships berthed there. A number of Banias worked as brokers for the European establishments in Surat and their role and influence will be discussed in a later chapter of this work.

Most observers agree that the Bania, in spite of his wealth, lived parsimoniously. His home was unpretentious in its looks and comforts, his clothes were simple, his diversions few and his passion was to hoard rather than spend money. What were the circumstances that influenced the making of such behaviour patterns? The explanation may lie partly in the ascetical temper engendered by aspects of Hinduism and Jainism (*aparigraha*=non-possession) and the political and administrative policies of the Mughal government as imposed by the city and provincial administrations. Max Weber has explained the prevalence of vegetarianism and abstinence from alcoholic drinks in terms of "anti-orgiastic" attitudes and the curbing of anger and passion "because of the belief in the demoniacal and diabolic origin of all emotions" and to the general ascetical temper of Brahmanism and the

philosophy of non-possession (*aparigraha*) advocated by Jainism.<sup>41)</sup> As far as accumulation and enjoyment of wealth are concerned, however, it must be remembered there was scarcely any aversion to the acquisition of wealth; indeed, it was the Bania's primary goal in life. And he was also not against its enjoyment according to his own ideas, witness the way in which he lavished his wealth in giving his womenfolk ornaments and jewelry with which they were often literally loaded down. The fact is that the Bania hoarded his wealth and was against any display of opulence. For this, which in part resulted in parsimony in living a comfortable life, the attitudes and practices of Mughal administrations on the local levels as they affected the Hindus, and especially the rich Banias, must be held responsible. John Fryer draws attention to the dangers of "a Banyan or Rich Broker to grow wealthy" for "it is so mightily a disquiet to the Governor, that he can never be at ease till he have seen the bottom of this mischief; which is always cured by transfusion of treasure out of the Bayan's into the Governor's coffers; and notwithstanding his artfulness in concealing wealth, the Governor often finds occasion to fleece them". Ovington also refers to the despotic nature of the local government which "breaks their spirits" and trains them in the habit of preserving and concealing their wealth as much as they can "lest the Mogul's exchequer should be made their treasury". For, should they make the slightest public display of their riches in the style of their homes, attire or other appurtenances, these "would be apt to change their owner".<sup>42)</sup> The Bania thus made a virtue of necessity and converted his money into precious metals and jewels which could be concealed with little difficulty. Secondly, there was also a lack of trust in the 'laws' enforced by the local administration for often these were merely personal whims. This sense of insecurity in the tenure of the ruler and his government made for hoarding rather than consumption and reinvestment of wealth whatever the force of an "ascetical temper" and "life-negating" philosophies. The extent of such hoarding of gold, silver, pearls and precious stones is indicated in the amounts of these forms of wealth carried away by Shivaji during his raid on Surat in 1664. Thevenot states that Shivaji found in the house of one Bania "twenty two pounds weight of strung pearls, besides a great quantity of others that were not as yet pierced". An English account of the raid states that "the day when he came away in the morning there was brought in near upon 300 porters, laden each with 2 bags of rupees, and some he guessed to be gold; that they brought in 28 *seers* of large pearls, with many other jewels, great diamonds, rubies, and emeralds".<sup>43)</sup> Such hoarded wealth was lost to reinvestment and the Bania probably knew that, but he had learnt the art of survival behind the façade of simple and unostentatious living and probably his 'meekness' was born of the faith that the meek shall inherit the earth.

The Bania was invaluable as a broker especially to the European trading establishments in Surat. He was aware that the foreign trader could not work without him, much less prosper, and he took full advantage of his special position. There are instances on record where a voyage from Mokha to Tuticorin had to be cancelled because of the illness of the broker. The broker was knowledgeable

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enough to assist the foreign merchants in steering their goods through the customs at Surat and the toll-posts in various towns *en route* to Ahmadabad and beyond; he had his own contacts in the transportation trade and knew of various ways of dealing with the Mughal bureaucracy. Some of them were also expert linguists. They "bargained, measured, kept accounts, and delivered unto the washers and performed all other offices" in behalf of the foreign employer. The weavers generally worked through particular brokers who took one per cent as their allowance in each bargain. Sometimes these brokers exploited weavers and spinners. They gave out "old worm-eaten decayed corn" to spinners for which they received yarn which they then sold to the English Factory. These buyers worked as intermediaries for the house brokers and through such complicity they were able to profit at the expense both of the producers and the European traders.<sup>44)</sup>

A numerous population engaged in the artisan and other trades formed the basis of the social pyramid. Among the various professions mentioned are those of the dyers, beaters, weavers and washers who were all connected with the great textile trade. A large number of weavers lived in Surat and the adjoining towns and villages, working in their homes and selling their products through the brokers. The washers and beaters prepared the cloth for the bleachers and dyers. A specialization of functions had already developed and each trade seems to have been organized into its own guild. Some of these groups turned out as many as 200 pieces of textiles a day and bleachers worked on 400 pieces per day. Sometimes the English attempted to bypass the brokers and deal directly with the manufacturers, and in Baroda an experiment in employing 800 workmen under English direction and supervision was tried in 1620. But such attempts had to be given up soon as the brokers exercised a pervasive control and could frustrate efforts at eliminating them without much effort.<sup>45)</sup>

These workmen were trained in an hereditary fashion and had centuries of practice and skill behind them. Ovington states that they excelled European manufactures in some respects, especially in the making of calicoes and silks. Surat had numerous workers engaged in the weaving of silk fabrics and in working of fine gold and silver thread.<sup>46)</sup> Besides these trades Surat also had considerable work for expert carpenters, especially shipbuilders. The Surat yard was equipped to repair ships and build craft of small and medium size. The chief carpenter was paid one *mahmudi* a day while his helpers were paid three-quarters of a *mahmudi*. A soap-making industry had also sprung up and this catered for the needs of the washers. We have already mentioned the tailoring industry. Other industries were embroidery, button-making, making of coarse or heavy cloth for sails of ships, needle-making and the making of designs used for block-printing of fabrics.<sup>47)</sup>

An extensive transportation industry had also developed along with foreign trade. Surat was the terminus for caravan routes from the north, east and south and employed a large number of persons for the provision of small boats and carts for the transportation of imported and exported goods. Many Parsis, as noted

above, worked in this trade. Transportation also involved hundreds of pack-animals, numerous *adowayes* (transport contractors), *peons*, and armed guards.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, at the very lowest level were the untouchable castes such as the *Halalkhors*. These were employed in household and public sanitation work and lived on the periphery of society. They were also used by sections of the administration as informers and spies as is recounted in the chapter on the city government below.

Some general observations may be made here on the standards of living of the people of Surat. First, the evidence, such as it is, gives us the impression that there were sharp contrasts in the standards of living of the rich and poor classes. While Surat had a large number of Banias who were rich and could count their acquisitions in terms of several hundreds of thousands of mahmudis or rupees, the peasant and artisan classes lived in conditions of general poverty. The Dutchman Pelsaert states that the common people lived in great poverty and the condition of their life could only be described as "the home of stark want and the dwelling place of bitter woe". Secondly, the economy operated on two levels or in two parts, one of which was highly monetized. We find prices of commodities bought and sold stated in terms of mahmudis or rupees throughout the century. In 1623 for instance, the price of wheat in Broach was quoted at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  mahmudis or Rs. 2 per *maund* of 40 *seers* and butter at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  mahmudis the *maund*. De Jongh states that "corn" (*bajra* and *jowar*=millets) was the cheapest of the cereals, wheat being less expensive than rice. The common people usually lived on 'corn' and wheat and could afford quantity of rice. Vegetables were cheap but *ghee* and butter were a luxury few of the common people could afford generally. Their homes were built of mud or clay and the furniture within was the barest minimum being confined to a few boxes for storage, some metal utensils and pottery jars, beds of quilts and mattresses spread out at night and stacked rolled up during the day. We have referred to the salary of a chief carpenter above. It was one mahmudi a day. An English letter of 1623 states that workmen making bread for the English were paid at 11 *pice* per *maund* of bread. Assuming that the carpenter had to maintain a family of six, including himself, on a monthly salary of 30 mahmudis he could spend only five mahmudis a month for expenses on housing, food, clothing, religious matters and entertainment for each member of his family. This could not have given such a family anything but a level of living a little above subsistence. Thirdly, we also have references to weavers being paid in terms of 'corn' and some of the brokers buying their products cheated them by giving them "old or decayed" stuff. It is reasonable to assume then that the worker, agricultural or industrial, earned part of his wages in money and part in kind. The wages in money were used by him to pay for his clothing and other items of expenditure and the payment in kind was used for food. Granting that cereals, during most normal years, were both plentiful and cheap, the cases of actual starvation may have been small. By the same token the average worker was left with little surplus after he paid for his needs and taxes, direct and indirect.



The wealth of the rich Bania rubbed off but little on the persons of the peasant and worker who were primarily responsible for producing the commodities which the Bania bought and sold. The Government was incapable of ensuring an equitable distribution of wealth among the various groups comprising the society over which it ruled. The welfare of the common man was scarcely considered a concern for the Government for its major aim was to extract as much as possible from the people so that recurrent surpluses of revenue could be contrived. Poverty for the common producer, middleman's profits for the Bania and large taxes for the Government were the conditions characterizing life in the seventeenth century society.<sup>49)</sup>

## (5)

We may now return to some of the points raised at the beginning of this chapter. These relate to three major criteria. First, did Surat evolve a "genuine community" within itself? Secondly, what was unique about the "urban experience" in Surat? Thirdly, what was Surat's role as an urban centre in the history of seventeenth-century India?

Though the European accounts describe Surat as a conglomeration of diverse communities living alongside each other, the total evidence suggests that in some respects Surat did develop a "genuine community" of its own. Two kinds of linkages gave Surat a degree of social cohesion and economic versatility. One was the vertical linkage which generally found the top occupied by the governmental authorities and the lower echelons comprising the mercantile classes and those engaged in commodity production. The Government functioned, as will be discussed in another chapter, through a variety of instruments such as the Governor and his staff and the Fort Commander. The nature of the city government was influenced, in part, by local circumstances and the nature and role of the Mughal bureaucracy in general. The Government of the Mughals, whether in Agra or Surat, was in the nature of personal rule wherein institutional laws had only secondary influence. The Government represented law and order, justice and equity which were interpreted and enforced by the person in authority and much depended on his general outlook and values. There were Governors who tried hard to be just as well as efficient as they understood justice and efficiency in the context of their own Mughal and civic experience. But there were also those who were farmers of the post and worked to make as much money as quickly as they could. But even in cases of worst oppression the Governor had to understand that he could function only with the cooperation of the people and that he could be dismissed by the Emperor should complaints against him reach Agra. The merchants and workers created Surat's wealth and this wealth gave the Governor and Agra their taxes. Many of the *Shah Bunders* (port officials) and even some Governors were merchants before they were elevated to their positions and continued to be in-



## CHAPTER III

### *The City Government*

Throughout the seventeenth century Surat was one of the major urban centres of Mughal India. Being essentially a port-city, based on a mercantile economy, its administration was, in many ways, different in its spirit and functions from other metropolitan administrations. The government of Surat, in a sense, displayed most of the strengths and weaknesses of the system of city administration under the great Mughals.

Since its annexation in 1573 by Akbar, Surat was constituted into a *sarkar* (administrative division) of the *subah* (province) of Ahmadabad or Gujarat. But the *sarkar* of Surat was treated differently from the other *sarkars* (there were nine such *sarkars* in Gujarat). The administrators of Surat were directly appointed by the imperial government and worked under the control of the provincial governor. Secondly, Surat was usually assigned as a revenue fief to a member of the imperial family; it was first assigned to prince Pervez and after his death to prince Khurram (the future emperor) and during Shah Jahan's reign it was assigned to his oldest daughter Jahanara Begum to defray her expenses of 'betel' (*pan*).<sup>1)</sup>

This special administrative arrangement was obviously based on Surat's importance as the premier port-city of the empire. Manucci states that "the governors sent by the king to Surat are persons of rank, men highly thought of and favoured by the King". And the emperors were always sympathetically cognizant of the complaints of Surat's merchants against corrupt or oppressive governors who were promptly punished either by transfer to other posts or dismissal from the imperial service if the complaints proved valid.

The *sarkar* of Surat was subdivided into *mahals* or *parganas* (revenue districts) larger towns or cities being constituted into *mahals* by themselves. The *Ain-i-Akbari*, the administrative manual of the time of Akbar, which reflects conditions at the beginning of the seventeenth century, states that Surat had 31 *mahals* with a total revenue of 19,035,180 *dams* (about £5357) of which the city and the port yielded 5,530,145 *dams* (about £1556).<sup>2)</sup> An eighteenth-century chronicle gives for Surat the same number of *mahals* but adds that there were 425 villages and 15 towns besides the city of Surat. The revenue figure given in this chronicle for the Surat *sarkar* is 49,458,950 *dams* (about £139,140), the revenue from the city being 15,000,000 *dams* (about £42,187). Manucci says that the city of Surat brought in annually Rs. 30 *lakhs* (3,000,000 or about £337,500) which seems to be a rather high figure.<sup>3)</sup>

Hamilton states that "from Anno 1690 to 1705 the revenues arising from the custom-house, land rents and poll money, *communis annis* came to 1,300,000 Rupees, which is Sterling 162,500 L."

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Governmental authority in Surat was divided between two separate officers, one being the *Mutsaddi* or the Governor and the other the *Qiladar* or Commander of the Fort. The Governor was appointed from Agra by *sanad* (charter), under the seal of the *Divan-i-Ala* (revenue minister) and had the rank of 100 personal and 200 contingent. But Fryer states that "the Governor of the Town had an army of 1500 men in pay, with matchlocks, swords and javelins; two hundred horse with quivers full of arrows at the bow of the saddles, lances at their right stirrup, swords of an unwieldy bulk, with bucklers hanging over their shoulders; their bows are curiously and strongly made with horn, and for that reason better in dry than wet weather". The Fort Commander was likewise appointed from Agra but under the seal of the Commander of the Artillery. The Commander held the rank of 250 cavalry, excluding his personal *mansab* (military rank) and contingent. The Commander had the military responsibility for the defence of the City and its port as also the *sarkar* and was assisted in this task by a *Faujdar* (army commander). Ovington describes the *Faujdar's* function as follows: "If any thefts or robberies are committed in the country, the Foursdar (*sic*), another officer is obliged to answer for them; who is allowed soldiers and servants under him to traverse the country, and look after the highways, to hunt out the robbers, and keep all suspected places quiet and safe for passengers".<sup>4)</sup>

This division of power through the two separate offices of the Governor and the Commander was based on both considerations of administrative efficiency and political need. The two acted as a kind of check on each other and in times of civil war, especially during a struggle for imperial succession, such division was particularly helpful. There were cases when the Governor and the Commander found themselves on opposite sides whether in factional politics or a war of succession. Such instances occurred in 1627 during the rebellion of Khurram and in 1657-1658 during the war of succession in which Aurangzeb emerged victor. In 1627 Khurram was close to the city of Surat and had demanded Rs. 10,000. On December 15 the fortress of Surat was delivered to him. In 1657 prince Murad, then governor of the province, resolved to plunder Surat and sent a force under one Shabaz Khan. The city was occupied but the Fort resisted. At the end of December there was an explosion of a mine which destroyed a part of the outer wall after which the Commander capitulated. But the attackers failed to find any cash in the Fort and consequently the city was sacked. In all such eventualities Surat became the prime target as the city and its *sarkar* were normally excluded from the jurisdiction of the provincial governor who was often a prince of the imperial family and in the event of his harbouring rebellious designs he first attempted to collect the needed treasure from the city.<sup>5)</sup>

We have already discussed the position and structure of the Fort and the fortifications of the city in an earlier chapter. The Fort was guarded very strictly. Manucci narrates his experience of a visit to the Fort which is interesting. He says: "These Governors may not leave the fortress during their term of office, nor

allow any stranger to enter, save any known medical men when necessity requires. This happened to me once. When I arrived at Surat, the commander of the fort was ill, and sent for me. At the request of the governor of the city I went to see him. On entering the fort, they conducted me inside with my head covered, and the patient met me at the first gate. He made excuses that he had no permission from the king to allow me inside. It seems to me these orders apply to the fortresses near the sea, due to the fear they have of Europeans".<sup>6)</sup> The general seclusion of the Fort and its commander from the rest of the administration is emphasized by most of the European observers from Mandelslo to Thevenot and Ovington. Thevenot states: "There are two Governours or *Nabad* (*sic*) at Surat, who have no dependence one on another, and give an account of their actions only to the King. The one commands the Castle, and the other the Town; and they encroach not upon on another's rights and duties". Ovington remarks: "The Governour of the Castle is appointed by the Mogul and his authority seldom stretches beyond the space of three years, in all which time he is a real prisoner under the appearance of a high commander, and under a severe and strict engagement never to pass without the walls of his Castle; but to be continually upon his guard, in a constant readiness for any emergency or surprise, all the time he is in the government".<sup>7)</sup>

The Governor's life and movements were marked by great pomp and dignity. The news of his appointment reached the city by indirect means weeks before his first arrival. He arrived into the city accompanied by a large retinue of soldiers and servants and his first public audience was a ceremonial in itself. Thevenot tells us that "the first time one goes to wait upon the Governour, as soon as they come they lay before him, five, six, or ten *Roupies*, every one according to his quality . . ." Fryer describes the pomp with which the Governor moved about: "For all the Governor comes to his seat attended every morning with 300 foot with fire-arms, three elephants in their clothing. . . forty horses mounted, four and twenty banners of state; besides a large retinue of the Cazy's, who is always present to assist him in law points. Moreover he has loud trumpets. . . with thundering kettle-drums. . ." Ovington speaks of his work that to his "management and care is committed the trust of all civil affairs. He receives addresses from the principal merchants and men of note, and all applications of moment from the inhabitants are made to him. He generally keeps at home for dispatching the business of his master, or the people under his care; and if he goes abroad, he sometimes takes the air upon an elephant, seated in a chair of state upon his back; and besides the keeper of the beast, carries along with him a peon, or servant to fan him, and drive away the busy flies and troublesome mosquitoes: this is done with the hair of a horse's tail fastened to the end of a small stick of a foot length, a very homely fan, but yet the only one in esteem with the grandees, and even the Emperor himself. To maintain the dignity of his post and station, he maintains several large elephants, and keeps in constant pay and readiness many soldiers, both horse and foot, to guard his person at home and abroad, and to be

ready for his dispatches".<sup>8)</sup>

The Governor lived well, kept a rich table, generally fancied expensive wines from Persia or Spain, kept horses specially brought from Persia and Arabia, went hunting wild game, was fond of European mastiffs and spent a fortune celebrating important household events such as a daughter's wedding. Some of the Governors were Persians (Hakim Masih-us-Zaman, 1635-1639; Mirza Arab, 1650-1652; 1657-1660) interested in Persian literature; others have been called men "undoubtedly of so great qualities", "noble and genteel person; and a "person of honour".<sup>9)</sup> Quite a few were themselves merchants before their elevation to the Governor's office and a few others had served the government in military or civil capacities. By and large they were men in the age group 40 to 60 and a few described as "old". Many owed their appointment to their patrons at the court and were invariably involved in the volatile and mercurial politics of Agra. Some continued their interest in their own personal trade and others had relatives in high positions in the government in the *sarkar* or elsewhere.<sup>10)</sup>

The personalities of the Governors and the working of their office were conditioned by the circumstances of their appointments and tenure and their own personal financial interests which often came into conflict with their official duties. Appointments through court patronage invariably determined the tenure of the appointee for any change in the power and prestige of the patron was bound to affect the occupant's tenure. Elsewhere we have given a list of persons known to have been Governors of Surat through the seventeenth century. This list shows that as a rule the tenure lasted for two years at a stretch though there were a few exceptions. The changes in occupants occurred because of their fall from grace at the court or because of complaints of intolerable corruption from merchants.<sup>11)</sup>

Another characteristic of the office was that often it was farmed out to the highest bidder. Thus Ishaq Beg was appointed to his post in 1621 because he promised to increase the collection of revenue by 200,000 mahmudis. In 1632 Mir Musa had to pay £10,000 to continue in his position. In 1639 he agreed to pay some 200,000 to 800,000 mahmudis more than his predecessor, Masih-us-Zaman. The effect of such rash commitments when coupled with the brevity and uncertainty of tenure inevitably led to a predilection to collect money on a large scale regardless of methods involved. The uncertainty of tenure also led the occupant to involve himself in the collection of the largest amount of money possible in the shortest time available so as to be able to lay aside a 'nest egg' in case he was dismissed from office and had to find his own livelihood. Under the circumstances, then, the functioning of the office was seldom free of corruption and extortion to which the European and native merchants were constantly subject. The occupant, in his turn, farmed out offices and collection agencies under his control. One such means was overcharging of customs dues by overpricing of goods. Another was to allow goods of favoured merchants to pass through customs unchecked on a basis of reciprocity of advantages. The mint was also used for personal enrich-

ment. Other means were to impose illegal cesses as was the case with Mir Musa who took Rs. 2, 3 or 4 per *maund* of goods from merchants. Rustum Zamir (1668-1670) had even a better idea; he simply bought lead at Rs. 1 per *maund* and sold it to the King at Rs. 12 the double *maund*. Toddy trees, licensing of bakers and other merchants to open shops at Swally were some of the other ways to add thousands of extra rupees to the personal account.<sup>12)</sup>

The most disturbing factor for the honest working of the office, perhaps, was the occupant's large-scale involvement in his own personal trade. Ishaq Beg was known as the "greatest merchant" of his day; Mirza Arab (1649-1652) dealt in lead and Mir Musa's list of trading activities is long indeed. Quite a few of them worked as money-lenders on the side-lines making large incomes by charging high rates of interest. They not only had their trading operations inland, Baroda, Broach, Ahmadabad and Cambay, but also in the Persian Gulf and Indonesian areas. But in this they were only following the examples set by the court. Nur Jahan, wife of the emperor Jahangir, and her brother Asaf Khan had extensive trade interests in the Persian Gulf and until their ships were laden or goods sold none else could do so. The governors naturally used their high positions to secure loadings for their own goods and sale of their personal goods in India and overseas possibly by escaping customs dues and affecting the legitimate commercial interests of other native merchants.<sup>13)</sup>

The Governor's relations with the indigenous merchants ranged from felicitous to despotic and oppressive. With the Muslim merchants, who were many and to which community the Governor himself belonged both before and after his occupancy, his relations were characterized by common religious-cum-cultural affiliations and larger self-interest. As Muslims they had decided advantages both with the Governor and the imperial court and as such few had any serious problems except some Armenians who suffered from time to time. With the Hindu and Jain merchants the case was different. As a rule the rich merchants such as Virji Vora and Mohandas Parekh fared much better than the average run of Banias, brokers and shroffs. Throughout the century we have instances of these hapless folk suffering imprisonment and flogging for no better reason than they had somehow brought on themselves the wrath of the Governor or his agents. It is true that they had recourse to the court where they could lodge their complaints and there are instances of Governors being dismissed on such complaints. But such attempts could be disastrous also as is narrated by Abbé Carré. He tells us: "At that time (1670) there was a Moor Governor (Mirza Saifulla), who was so tyrannical with the merchants that no one knew what to do about it. He was insatiable and, instead of being satisfied with the rich presents and large sums of money which he received from every side, became so insupportable that it seemed the more he got, the more he ill-treated those who, he knew, could satisfy his unjust claims. This at last compelled some of the principal merchants to write to the court of the Mughal, complaining of the bad treatment they were receiving from him. But they did not

know that the Governor had a brother, as wicked as himself, with the King; he had the ear of the ministers and skilfully managed to intercept all the Surat letters to the court. The letters of these poor merchants having thus fallen into his hands, he immediately sent them to the Surat Governor, who thus learnt of their just complaints against him. He at once sent to invite these merchants to come to his house for some important business. They hurried there, thinking that a favourable answer had come from the court. They were, however, very surprised on arrival to find the Governor in a furious rage. He threw himself on the leader of the band and beat him with slippers, which is the greatest insult that can be done to them. He then showed them the letters of complaint that had been sent to the court, and bullied them so much that they were obliged to find a considerable sum of money for him immediately; and to complete this tyranny he seized two large ships of an Armenian merchant called Coja Minas (Khwaja Minhas), who only got them back after some time by large gifts". Abbé Carré further tells us that "the governor hears that many Hindus and their families were leaving the town, both to avoid the extortions and from fear of an attack from King Shivaji, of which there was much talk. He had all the gates shut, and posted guards everywhere for some days, while he levied a fine of more than a million dinars. This, he said, was for the pay of the soldiers whom he had brought to defend the town against Shivaji". One of the Governors, Ghiyas-ud-din Khan, was reported to have collected some 10 million rupees by extortion.<sup>14)</sup>

The Hindu and Jain merchants had their own *Mahajan* organization to safeguard their interests and in cases of intolerable tyranny this organization could call for a general exodus of the merchants from Surat to some other town. We have referred to such an action elsewhere in this work. As a rule, however, perceptive governors always took care to carry the principal merchants with them for they well understood that their own tenure and prosperity depended upon happy working relationships with the merchant community. In a few cases they even took up the merchant's complaints and urged appropriate action on the imperial administration as was the case with protests against the English taking over the Red Sea trade in 1619. At other times they were compelled to take actions which they well know would harm the city. This was the case when Aurangzeb ordered a general persecution of the Hindu and Shi'a merchants and the Governor was prodded by the local Qazi which caused an exodus of Banias from Surat led by Bhimji Parekh as recounted elsewhere.

The case with the Governor's relationships with the European traders rested on somewhat different bases. The Europeans were by no means helpless as were the indigenous merchants. They had their own contacts in Agra to counteract whatever mischief the Surat Governor contemplated. Besides they were backed by powerful commercial corporations, insisted on maintaining their own armed guards and arms including the guns in their factories and, above all, had the command of the seas by which they could take appropriate retaliatory measures against in-



justices. The constant irritants were the question of the quantum of customs dues to be paid though these were seemingly regulated by imperial agreements and insistence by the Governors on "presents" and bribes. The Europeans paid the bribes and gave gifts from time to time but at times the Governor's greed developed a boundlessness excessive even for that place and age. The history of the city government's relations with the English, Dutch and later French, is punctuated by such occasional armed conflicts as when the English and the Dutch seized Indian ships on the seas to put pressure on Agra to deal with them justly. In all such cases the Europeans were successful. On the Governor's part it may be pointed out that very often he rightfully complained of piracy by Europeans though the Companies concerned denied that the pirates were acting in their name or behalf. Increasing European piracy in the Arabian Sea became a source of major and recurring conflict during the second half of the seventeenth century. But, by and large, both the Europeans and the Governors knew the bounds of each other's endurance and in spite of constant complaints the Europeans continued to function in Surat because of the high profits they made in Indian trade. These relationships, then, ranged from cordial to hostile the average being benign tolerance of each other.<sup>15)</sup>

The city administration faced two kinds of major crises in which the inadequacy of the Government was pathetically laid bare. One such kind of crisis was when the rains failed and famine stalked the city and *sarkar*. This was especially so in 1630-1632 and the actions of the city government were not only totally inadequate but also, in some cases, downright heartless. Mir Musa, for instance, is reported to have cornered the supplies of wheat along with a few rich merchants and sold the cereal at an unconscionable profit when scarcity threatened the people under his care. There were also challenges to law and order which the administration was not able to face appropriately. In 1648 a band of 150 armed freebooters attacked the Dutch Factory. That such a large group could enter the city without the Governor and his officers knowing anything at all is hard to believe. Increasingly through the second half of the century the insecurity of life and property began to increase. In 1659 there were riots between Hindus and Muslims and after 1664 an English report had it that "Surat is become a garrison more than a town of trade".<sup>16)</sup>

This challenge to Surat's safety came from the Maratha war of independence so relentlessly carried on by Shivaji. Shivaji sacked Surat twice, the first time in January 1664 and a second time in October 1670. A considerable time before he descended on Surat on January 6 there had been persistent rumours of an impending Maratha attack. The Governor Inayat Khan was not only inept but a coward to boot. He took no measures to prepare his forces for the defence of the city. At the first sign of attack he, along with some rich merchants, sought safety in the Fort leaving the city open for leisurely plunder by the Marathas. The town's fortifications were so weak that Shivaji could easily assault it and by October 12 he had burnt down some 3000 houses and carried away plunder worth more than

one million pounds sterling. In October 1670, as the English Council reported in a letter from Surat: "The 3rd October Shivaji's army approached the walls and after a slight assault the defendants fled under the shelter of the Castle guns, and they possessed themselves of the whole town, some few houses except which stood on their defence, to wit, the English house, the Dutch, and French, and the two *Sarais* or *Scraglias*, one whereof was maintained by the Persian and Turkish merchants, the other by a Tartar King called King of Cascar. . . . Part of the army the same day assaulted the Tartar's quarter and the English house; but the French made a private peace for themselves, on what terms we cannot learn; and so never shot off a gun, though at first being strong in men they vapoured as if they would have fought the whole army themselves." At the time of leaving the city with all the booty he could collect Shivaji sent a letter to the city government warning that if they failed to pay him an annual tribute of 1,200,000 rupees he would return.<sup>17)</sup>

Shivaji's two raids in six years demonstrated the deepening crisis of the Mughal empire and its administration in Surat. In 1664 the Governor, Inayat Khan, proved himself to be both unprepared and incapable of dealing with Shivaji's attack and deserted his post to flee to the safety of the Fort. The Europeans stood firm because of their determination and superiority in fire-power. Aurangzeb dismissed Inayat Khan and rewarded the English with concessions in the rate of customs duties as a mark of his appreciation for their valour. The Mughal government also began to construct a fortified wall around the town but 1670 proved that this effort was feeble. The fact of the matter was that the Maratha rebellion was beyond the capacity of the Mughal political system to contain, much less defeat. Equally futile were the Mughal efforts to deal with the problem of European piracy on the high seas. From time to time the Mughals made efforts to strengthen their sea arm. In 1654 a Dutch report said that the Mughals had bought 29 pieces of artillery to mount them on their ships. Manucci recounts an incident when Aurangzeb was much enraged at the capture of royal ships sailing to the holy land of Islam and wished to "create a war navy". He discussed a plan to entrust Europeans in his pay with the task of building war ships but his minister Ja'far Khan demurred saying that it was risky to trust foreigners in such delicate matters. Undeterred, Aurangzeb ordered an Italian, Ortencio Bronzoni, to build a small ship which, when ready, was floated on a great tank. The European craftsmen demonstrated their skill in managing the sails and piloting the vessel and firing off the guns mounted on it. Manucci says: "On seeing all this, after reflecting on the construction of the boat and the dexterity required in handling it, Aurangzeb concluded that to sail over and fight on the ocean were not things for the people of Hindustan, but only suited to European alertness and boldness. Thus at last he abandoned the project entertained with such obstinacy"<sup>18)</sup> Manucci's naivety is touching but his political perception is doubtful. Indians did have considerable expertise in ship-building and sailing, for many of the ships used by the English and Dutch were built by Indians at Gandevi, Navsari, Daman and Kalyan and a significant part of the crew on them was Indian. Aurangzeb's decision reflected both

the political and technological bankruptcy of the Mughal system.

This political bankruptcy was seen as much in Aurangzeb's Deccan wars as in his religious policies. It sparked the Maratha rebellion and the flames kindled by it eventually consumed the empire. The Marathas repeatedly threatened Surat through the last decades of the seventeenth and the first two decades of the eighteenth century and the end of Surat's prosperity was fast approaching.<sup>19)</sup>

(2)

In many ways Mir Musa, in his personality and official career, reflects the strengths and weaknesses of Surat's Mughal governors. He first comes to our notice in an English letter of November 29, 1623 which states that he was being appointed to a *jagir* (revenue assignment) in Cambay. He is described as a "friend to merchants and a man that delights much in *tophi* (*tuhafa* = gifts) but as hard as flint in bargain but a good paymaster". In 1625 we still find him in Cambay buying "jewels and other rarities" from the English to whom he offered Rs. 2,500 for some emeralds in May of that year. In December he bought two pieces of tapestry from the English agent at Ahmadabad as a present to be sent to the Emperor Jahangir as his own "*moozra*" (ceremonial offering). We next find him in an English dispatch from Surat to Lahore dated February 6, 1627 as resident in his *jagir* at Bardoli where his servants had detained some English goods for *rahdari* (tolls). Bardoli was a *pargana* of Surat and along with Momra yielded a revenue of 5,000,000 *dam*s (about £1407). In 1628 he acts as a mediator in a dispute between the Governor of Surat, Jam Quali Beg, and officials at Olpad concerning customs dues to be paid by the English. There was a jurisdictional dispute for Olpad is mentioned as a part of the Broach *sarkar* though Surat claimed that it lay within its jurisdiction. Mir Musa suggested that the dispute be referred to Agra for settlement and in the meantime the dues be withheld. On January 1628 the English report that Mir Musa was in the process of buying some jewels from them; on January 21 he is stated to have reported to have spoken in their favour to Shah Jahan who was on his way to Agra for his coronation which took place on February 4, 1628. Mir Musa was in Agra at that time and advised the English to delay sending their caravan until the Emperor had time to enforce law and order along the route which was then in a dangerous state. An English letter of April 27, 1629 calls him "our new Governor" suggesting that Mir Musa must have been appointed to the Surat post not too long before that date. Soon after assuming office Mir Musa began to develop very cordial relations with the English and opened negotiations with the Portuguese. As an avowed friend of the English he connived at their passing their goods through the Surat customs unchecked. Such a favour must have been based on anticipations of reciprocation in gifts and business deals. But while the English loved to evade payments of customs dues they were averse to the Governor taking whatever he fancied from among their goods gratis. By April 13,



1630 the English change their opinion of him and complain that the Governor was sending false information against them to Agra and suggested that an English agent be posted there to frustrate the Governor's mischief. Mir Musa also began to negotiate with the Portuguese in Bulsar though the Emperor was, at this time, contemplating action against them in Bengal and elsewhere. For Mir Musa imperial politics and personal business, it seems, did not mix for he continued to send his own merchandise in Portuguese ships one of which was detained by the English in November 1630. The Governor was carrying on extensive commercial activities in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere and he had also tried to get the famous Virji Vora interested in some kind of a business partnership. During 1632-1634 he is reported to have set up a virtual monopoly over trade in wheat, lead and indigo. In February 1632, it is reported, the Governor, in an unholy alliance with some other leading merchants, cornered the supply of wheat selling it at Rs. 4 per 40 *seers* when the normal price was 50% less. It should be remembered that this was a time of scarcity after the earlier year's famine which indicates his rather amoral nature. A Surat letter of April 1632 complains that the Governor "prevents all others from buying lead and will give what he pleases for it" insisting that the English sell it to him and none else. His control over the trade in lead and indigo continued until December 1634.

Mir Musa was obviously rising in official estimation in Agra. Before December 1634 he was given the title of Muiz-ul-Mulk by the Emperor Shah Jahan. He had his brothers well placed in Gandevi and Ahmadabad and he had his own agents operating in Cambay. Toward the end of 1635 he is reported as being replaced in the Surat Governorship by Masih-us-Zaman and transferred to Cambay. This may have been due to Mir Musa's falling in disfavour with Asaf Khan, the Emperor's father-in-law. But Mir Musa's sojourn in Cambay was brief for a report of August 25, 1636 mentions a rumour of his return to Surat which seems to have materialized after September 7, 1636. He remained as Governor of Surat until 1642 when a communication of January 27 of that year reports his removal from his post. Another notice of April 5, 1648 says that he was back in Surat where he remained until November 16, 1649 being finally replaced by Mirza Arab. Mir Musa had fallen into imperial disfavour for Shah Jahan revoked his *mansab* (military rank) and dismissed him from the imperial service on complaints that he had damaged the interests of the merchants of Surat and ruined the nearby areas by his administrative indiscretions.

Mir Musa was a typical product of his age. He had considerable skill in manipulating the levers of power at the capital and was an able merchant in his own right. He was obviously fond of amassing wealth and was not squeamish about how he did it. He lived well and proved to be more durable in his tenure at Surat than many other persons who occupied the Governor's post in that city, longer than most others. He was corrupt but no more so than most others of his class and rank. He freely accepted bribes liberally given him by merchants, Indians and

Europeans alike. He appreciated the value of his post for he bid high to get it spending some £25,000 to secure it and hold it. He promised much more substantial amounts by way of revenue collection for the Treasury (some 7,200,000 mahmudis according to one report) to be the Governor and it is obvious that he tried hard not only to fulfil his bid but also to collect more for his retirement. But he had overreached himself for by 1641 he found himself short of his commitment by 3,100,000 mahmudis (about £15,500) and, by October 1651, had uncleared debts of many hundreds of thousands of rupees. He was extortionate and imposed on his foreign friends for valuable 'gifts' which earned for him epithets such as 'rogue', 'corrupt' and 'perverse'.

His career shows in some vivid details the working of the Surat Governorship in some of its aspects which impinged on the lives of the people in his care. His exit was scarcely lamented; there was a sense of relief and joy when his end came. He was undoubtedly able in many ways but had little sense of probity and much less integrity. In the absence of these qualities he reflected the general failure of sections of the Mughal nobility for whom the end, wealth, power and all that went with these, justified the means. He was both a product and perpetuator of the system which after Akbar increasingly became venal and despotic. That Surat could survive the regime of such men and prosper through a major part of the seventeenth century reflects well on the skill of its merchants and the hard work of its artisans.<sup>20)</sup>

## (3)

We will now turn to an examination of the working of the structure and functioning of the bureaucracy under the Governor of the city. The *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* states there was a total of some 29 departments for the administration of the city and the *sarkar*. These may be conveniently grouped in seven distinct categories such as (a) the military (artillery commandant and the superintendent of magazines), (b) Judicial (Chief Judge, *Qazis*, Court *Daroga* and the Superintendent of the Civil Courts), (c) Religious (the *Sadr*, *Muhtasib*, the Superintendent of Charitable Endowments and the Superintendent of Annual Presents for Mecca and Medina), (d) Revenue (the Great *Bakshi*, the *Amin* of the Treasury and the Superintendent of Rent Collections), (e) Commerce (the Superintendent of horses, cattle markets, mint, salt, customs, provisions, jewelry and fancy markets and corn markets), (f) Administration (the *Mir Saman*, the Post Master, reporters and peons) and (g) Public Works (Superintendents of public works, hospitals and *Langhar Khanas*). Fryer, Thevenot and Ovington also give us similar lists of departments and their officers. Among the important officers mentioned by them are the *Shah Bunder*, the Mint-Master, the *Kotwal* and the *Qazi*.<sup>21)</sup>

The *Shah Bunder* was the Port Officer and his office was often farmed out to the highest bidder and some of the Governors of the city were former *Shah Bunder*

ders. Often some of the leading merchants were appointed to the post. Some of the occupants have been mentioned by name in the European accounts and these are Khwaja Hasan Ali (1615-1616), Ishaq Beg (1616), Khawaja Jalal-ud-din (1626), Mirza Mahmud (1628) and Sayyid Mahmud (1673-1674). The last-named wanted to get the French house in Surat for himself as it was in the best location in the town and the port.<sup>22)</sup> The major work of the office was the assessment and collection of customs dues on the import and export of goods and bullion. The severity of examination at the Surat customs is commented upon by all European visitors from Sir Thomas Roe in 1615 to Ovington practically at the end of the century. Tavernier states: "As soon as merchandise is landed at Surat it had to be taken to the custom-house, which adjoins the fort. The officers are very strict and search persons with great care." In their eagerness to detect deception the customs-officers stripped travellers almost naked and searched all their baggage thoroughly.<sup>23)</sup> The reasons for such severity were two: many a time many travellers did attempt to evade dues and secondly the customer was always eager to ferret out articles which he could overcharge and thus make money for himself. Fryer describes the procedure at the customs: "The Custom-house has a good front, where the chief customer appears certain hours to *chop* (*chaap*), that is, to mark outward-bound, and clear those received in; upon any suspicion of default he had a Black-Guard that by a *chawbuck*, a great whip, extorts confession; there is another hangs up at the daily waiters, or *Meerbar's choultry* (*Mir-Bahar*=harbour-master), by the landing-place, as a terror to make them pay Caesar his due; the punishment, if detected, being only corporal, not confiscation of goods; this place is filled with publicans, waiters and porters, who are always at the receipt of customs, but are a little too tardy sometimes in the delivery of goods, making the merchants dance attendance, till a right understanding be created betwixt the *Shah Bunder* and them, which commonly follows when the first is mollified".<sup>24)</sup> Tavernier says that private individuals paid as much as 4 and 5 per cent duty on all their goods. The English and Dutch paid less. He adds: "But, on the other hand, I believe that, taking into account what it costs them in deputations and presents, which they are obliged to make every year at court, the goods cost them nearly the same as they do private persons". Pieter Van Dam gives a list of customs charges at Surat on various commodities ranging from 4½ mahmudis to 45 mahmudis based on cost of the article. Later he says that all merchandise was charged 3½%, gold exported or imported 2%, port duty (*poortgelt voor uytgaan de alfandigo*) on outward goods one mahmudi per pack of linen, indigo 4½ mahmudis per 4 maunds and 5 seers. Broecke mentions 1% as *dasturi* on all incoming and outgoing goods which means a commission for customs services. Ovington says that "All strange coin, whether imported or exported, pays to the Mogul's officers, two and an half per cent, and other goods pay more."<sup>25)</sup> Aurangzeb in the year 1665 issued new orders on customs to be charged; "custom duty on all commodities brought in for sale was fixed at 2½% of the *value* in the case of Muslims and 5% in that of Hindu vendors". In 1667 the Emperor abolished the customs duties completely for Muslims while

the Hindus continued to be charged 3½%.

Apart from the value of the customs revenue to the state the Governor profited a great deal from them through his understanding with the *Shah Bunder* to whom the office was farmed out. Besides this the income from *Toddy* fetched 12,000 mahmudis (about £600) and the mint brought in Rs. 1,100,000 (about £123,750) a year from Surat under Aurangzeb. The customs office had its own *diwan* to collect duties and he too was a cog in the whole machine of extracting money from merchants and others.<sup>26)</sup>

The mint was an important institution and a source of income for the state and the governor. The administration of the mints was first taken over as imperial responsibility by Akbar around 1577. The principal mint was to be located at Fatehpur-Sikri with other mints at Lahore, Bengal, Jaunpur, Patna and Ahmadabad. His silver rupee weighed 180 grains, the copper *dam* or *paisa* bought 1.5 of its own weight in copper. Gold issues were also brought out from time to time but were not in commercial usage. There was also a mint at Surat which was closed between 1600 and 1615 but was restarted in 1620-1621. It was capable of turning out currency worth Rs. 6000 a day but it worked rather irregularly for the officer in charge of it fixed only a few days in the month for its operation and the English complained that sometimes they ran the risk of waiting for weeks or even months before they could get their metal turned into coins.

The principal currency used in Surat was the mahmudi which circulated in parts of Western India for besides Surat the mahmudis were also coined at Mulher, near Jetapur in the Baglan area. The mahmudi was also minted at Navanagar. It was a silver coin and its value rose from two-fifths of the rupee to four-ninths in the course of the first half of the seventeenth century. The Surat mint derived a profit of some Rs. 1,100,000 (£123,750) according to Manucci and a rupee coin issued in 1659-1660 had on it the words *Surat Bunder Mubarak* (the Blessed Port of Surat). Fryer says, "Over against the Custom-house is a stately entrance into the Mint, which is a large town of offices within itself: hither repair all *Shroffs* or bankers, for the proof of silver, which in this place is most refined, and purest from alloy, in the world; as is also their gold: their lowest coin is of copper". The mint was also farmed out and provided a source of additional income for the Governor.<sup>27)</sup>

One of the most important governmental functions in the city was the administration of justice. The prevention and detection of crime were the responsibility of the *Kotwal* or Chief of Police. Thevenot says that his principal function was to take cognizance of criminal affairs. "He orders all criminals to be punished in his presence, either by whipping or cudgelling, and that correction is inflicted many times in his house, and sometimes on the street at the same place where they have committed the fault. When he goes abroad through the town, he is on horse-back, attended by several officers on foot, some carrying batons and great whips, other lances, swords, targets, and maces of iron like the great pestles of a mortar; but all have a dagger at their sides." Fryer states: "The next in executive power is the

*Catwal* (*Kotwal*), the governor of the night, as the other two officers rule the day (Governor and the *Qazi*); or nearer our constitution, the sherriff of the city; for after the keys are carried to the Governor, it is the *Catwals* business with a guard of near two hundred men, to scower the streets and brothels of idle companions; to take an account of all people late out, to discover fire and housebreakers, and to carry all lewd persons to prison, which is solely committed to his charge; so that all night long he is heard by his drums and trumpets, shouting and hallowing of his crew in their perambulation through all parts of the city; with lights and flambeaus, with some few of his companions in coaches or *palenkeens* (litters carried by four servants): moreover he seizes all debtors, and secures them, and has the care of punishing and executing all offenders". Ovington describes the *Kotwal* thus: "The *Catoual* is another officer in the city, somewhat resembling a Justice of the Peace, in endeavouring the suppression of all enormities in the city. For which reason he is obliged to ride the streets for prevention of disorder, thrice in the night, at 9, 12 and 3 o'clock, till 5 in the morning, at which hours the drums beat, and a large, long copper trumpet sounds aloud. The *Catoual* is always attended with several peons and soldiers armed with swords, lances, bows and arrows, and some with a very deadly weapon, a rod of iron about the cubit's length, with a large ball of iron at the end, which is able with ease to dash out the brains and shatter the bones at once. When he meets with a person guilty of petty irregularities, or some trivial offence, he confines him for some time; but if his misdemeanour be more notorious, he must smart for it by a *chawbuck* (whip), or *bastinado*".<sup>28</sup>)

The three statements given above give us a vivid idea of the terror inspired by the *Kotwal*, his rather rough and ready methods and his vast powers over the citizens. Thevenot's statement about the *Kotwal* punishing criminals may leave an impression that he had some judicial functions also. This was not true for obviously Thevenot has confused the *Kotwal's* "third-degree" methods with punishment awarded after a trial. One peculiar feature of his work was that he was held liable for an undetected robbery and obliged to make good the loss for the victim. Under such circumstances he was wont to "find" the offender so that he may not have to pay for the robbery. Manucci states that "it is the practice that whoever is in authority has to pay for loss by robbery". Manucci has some more interesting details on the work of the *Kotwal*. He says: "There is still another subaltern official that they call the *Kotwal*, who is a sort of lieutenant of police. It is his business to stop the distillation of *arrack* (spirits, 'arq'), the *eau-de-vie* used in the Indies. He has to see that there are no public women in the town, nor anything else forbidden by the king. He obtains information about all that goes on, so as to be able to send in his report. For this purpose there are throughout the Mogul Empire certain persons known as '*alarcor*' (*halalkhor*), a word which means 'men who live on what is well earned'. These men are under obligation to give twice a day to clean out every house, and they tell the *kotwal* all that goes on. On his part, the *kotwal* must render an account to the king of what he has heard has happened, whether it be by night or by day. He also has the duty of arresting



thieves and criminals. He is subordinate to the *qazi*, and receives orders from him; and if anyone is robbed within the bounds of his jurisdiction, he is forced to make good what has been taken. It is also his business to collect the income from the town. Under his orders there is a considerable body of cavalry and a great number of foot soldiers; for in every ward there is a horseman and twenty to thirty foot soldiers, who, in a sort of way, go the round". Fryer refers to the *halalkhor* as base people "because they defile themselves by eating anything and do all servile offices". Ovington also refers to the *halalkhor* as "eat-alls or eaters at large", people who drink anything potable and eat whatever comes along including carrion. They performed the sanitary services in the houses of all the residents in a ward and were untouchable as their contact was considered "polluting" and despised. That the *kotwal* used them as his spies is an interesting point added by Manucci.<sup>29)</sup>

The duties of the *kotwal* were as varied as were his powers vast. He was the Governor's "eyes and ears" and the designated protector of the city against criminals and miscreants. The Mughal works describe the ideal *kotwal* as a God-fearing and conscientious as well as just official, enforcing justice. He should be the best informed man in the city who should know every house and building in the city and act as an impartial guardian of the city's safety. The essential qualifications for this office, declares the *Ain*, are vigour, experience, deliberation, patience, astuteness and humanity. But all such sentiments remained pious intentions and the reality of the nature of the person and his office was rather one of terror than kindness, tyranny rather than humanity. Not much value, as J. N. Sarkar says, can be attached to such pronouncements.<sup>30)</sup>

The dispensation of justice in criminal cases was the responsibility of the *Qazi* for the Governor was empowered to deal only with civil litigation. The *Qazi* also had the responsibility of enforcing the ordinances of Islamic law of Sunni persuasion of the Hanifi school. He officiated at Muslim weddings and registered them, and as Ovington states he was a "person skilled in the municipal laws, acts as judge, and is consulted in matters relating to the civil customs of the Empire". The *Mufti* was specially concerned with "all that concerns the Muslim religion". Persons appearing before the *Qazi*'s court could resort to taking an oath on the *Quran* for Muslims and by putting a hand on the cow for Hindus. Punishments ranged from fines to whipping and mutilation; the death penalty could be given only with the consent of the ruler.<sup>31)</sup> Fryer narrates some cases of "exemplary punishments". He says: "The one was of an Armenian, *chawbucked* (flogged) through the city for selling of wine. The other was of a goldsmith who had coined copper *rupees*; first they shaved his head and beard, as our countrymen do bailiffs when they presume to arrest in privileged places; then putting a fool's cap on his head, they set him on an ass, with his face to the tail, which is led by an *Holencore* (*Halalkhor*), and one of their drums is beat before him, which is an affront of the highest degree; thus they led him up and down the city, where the boys and soldiers

treat him but scurvily, pelting him all the way he passes: being brought back to prison they cut off his hand, and let him lie during the Governor's pleasure. The third was a pack of thieves that had infested the roads a long time, after some whiles imprisonment the *Banias* proffered money for their redemption; but the Great Mogul sending an express, they were led to execution; they were fifteen, all of a gang, who used to lurk under hedges, in narrow lanes, and as they found opportunity by a device of a weight tied to a cotton bowstring made of guts (which they sew cotton) of some length, they used to throw it upon passengers so, that winding it about their necks, they pulled them from their beasts, and dragging them upon the ground strangled them, and possessed themselves of what they had. . .” Broecke narrates two instances of justice in Surat in 1622 and 1626. One involved five men who were beheaded and a woman buried up to her navel who was left to groan; they were thieves and the woman was their accomplice. The other involved a Bania woman, 13 or 14 years old, daughter of the Dutch shroff Karsonji Parekh, who was abducted and was kept in confinement and then released. Instead of punishing the offenders the *Qazi*, says Broecke, had her whipped and her father had to pay a ransom of Rs. 1500 for her release. Broecke adds that this was an instance of “Muslim terror and Muslim sense of justice where Hindus were concerned”.<sup>32)</sup>

In spite of all solemn injunctions and strict requirements of qualifications to be appointed to a *Qazi's* post, cases of corruption in the *Qazi's* office were to be found from time to time. Manucci chronicles some of these cases of corruption. In March 1706 the *Qazi* of Surat had gone to Gandevi to collect the rents of lands that had been assigned to him. The Marathas attacked the town and the *Qazi*, being unable to flee, was taken prisoner by them. The Marathas, says Manucci, “pierced his hands, passed a cord through the holes, and dragged him about everywhere in the country, demanding money from him and a statement of where his hoards were buried. From these tortures he died. This was a merited punishment, for the man was not only an oppressor, but an unjust judge.” J. N. Sarkar states that “the great power and irresponsible position of the *Qazi* enabled him to turn his office into a vast field of corruption, and all the *Qazis* of the Mughal period, with a few honourable exceptions, were notorious for taking bribes.”<sup>33)</sup>

The other officers of city government were the *Faujdar*, the *Waqianavis* and the *Harkara*. It has been stated above that the *Faujdar* was to assist the Fort Commander in the military security of the city and *sarkar*. Tievenot calls him a “provost” whose duty is “to secure the country about, and to answer for all the robberies committed there” while Ovington states: “If any thefts or robberies are committed in the country, the *Foursdar* (*sic.*), another officer, is obliged to answer for them; who is allowed soldiers and servants under him to traverse the country, and look after the high-ways, to hunt out the robbers, and keep all suspected places quiet and safe for passengers”. Manucci observes that “throughout the empire the king is obliged to maintain *fosdars* (*faujgars*) that is, ‘lords of an army’



-- for if he had no such officers no one would pay him either revenue or tribute". These officers were evidently expected to assist the Revenue Collectors in their work of extracting taxes from unwilling or recalcitrant farmers and a great deal of physical force and torture were used by them. They were also charged with the safety of travellers on the highway and "if any merchant or traveller be robbed in daylight, they are obliged to pay compensation. If robbed at night, it is the traveller's fault for not having halted earlier, and he loses all, without his complaint being heard".<sup>34)</sup> According to these statements, then, the jurisdictions of the *Kotwal* and the *Faujdar* related to the city and areas outside the city respectively with the *Faujdar* being specifically responsible for the security of highways and assistance to revenue authority in tax collections outside the city. The *Kotwal* performed similar functions in tax-gathering within the city.

The *Waqianavis* and the *Harkara* were reporters or "intelligence agents" or "spies". The former was a regular reporter who provided periodic reports to the Governor on all happenings in the city. Thevenot explains the reporter's work as one "who writes and keeps a register of all that happens within the extent of the country where he is placed". Ovington calls him "the Mogul's public intelligencer, and is employed to give a weekly account from Surat to the Court of India, of all occurrences here of truth and moment". The *Waqianavis*, therefore, seems to have been appointed to report to the King on happenings in the city which also included the conduct of the Governor and public complaints against the rule of the Governor. He, therefore, acted as a check on the Governor and reported directly to the King. The *Harkara* was a "most secret class of reporters" who acted as a spy or check on the *Waqianavis*. Ovington states that the *Harkara* was also a reporter who "listens to all kinds of news, whether true or false, listens to everything that happens, whether of moment or of no account, and reports to the great Mogul whatever is done or spoke of; but with so soft a pen, that nothing may offend, considering the profound veneration, due to such a powerful Prince, whose frowns are mortal".<sup>35)</sup>

The collection and accounting of taxes were the duties assigned to the *Diwan* or *Amalguzar* or *Amin* assisted by a numerous staff, among them the *bitikchi* (accountant). Agricultural taxation, though very important for the *sarkar* as a whole, must have been only of limited significance in a city such as Surat where the major part of the governmental revenue came from the customs, the working of the mint and commercial taxes. There were ground rents charged on projections occupied by shop keepers, taxes on transportation of goods in and out of the city, the 5% minting charge for coinage, fees for stamping weights and measures, taxes on manufactures and trades, sales taxes, property and income taxes and an assortment of other taxes. As S. R. Sharma observes, "the Mughals cast their financial net very widely over their entire population. No class of their subjects escaped contributing to their treasury. The poorest classes always paid the salt tax; the artisans paid the professional tax if not the license fees; cultivators paid the

land revenues; the Hindus paid the *jiziya* (poll tax) from 1526 to 1563 and again from 1679 to 1707. The customs and transit duties were also passed on to their customers by the merchants". Under the system of farming out certain offices the assignee had a natural temptation to squeeze out as much as was possible from his tax payers so that he might be able to fulfil his commitment for his office and also secure a substantial share for his private benefit. Indeed the number of taxes and imposts levied legally and illegally ran into several scores and were known to have existed at lower levels of administration throughout the seventeenth century. Aurangzeb is stated to have abolished some 78 such exactions in 1673. How long this writ was effectively obeyed by his officers in provinces and cities we have no means of knowing precisely. The fact that there was need for Aurangzeb to issue a degree abolishing such exactions even though similar action was taken by his grandfather Jahangir indicates that such imperial decrees remained pious hopes.<sup>36)</sup>

The *Muhtasib* and the *Sadr* were concerned only with the religious and moral life of the Muslims in the city. The former was the Censor of Morals of the Muslims whose duty it was to enforce a strict observance of religious duties enjoined in Islam which ranged, under a ruler such as Aurangzeb, from enforcing the appropriate length of beards to observance of the Friday prayer and the fast of *Ramzan*. The *Sadr* was entrusted with distribution of state endowments to places of religious worship, Islamic educational institutions and financing of pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina by indigent but pious Muslims. Surat and adjoining areas had many noteworthy mosques which were kept in a state of appropriate upkeep from funds appropriated from the public exchequer. Under Aurangzeb pursuing the policy of his Sunni zeal the city government officials such as the Governor, the *Qazi* and *Muhtasib* were ordered to enforce decrees for persecution of Hindus and Shi'as and also to deface and destroy Hindu shrines. We have elsewhere referred to the effects of such policies resulting in a mass exodus of Banias from Surat and need not dilate upon them here.<sup>37)</sup>

How did the average citizen of Surat fare under the regimen of the city government? That the policy of discrimination against the Hindus existed from time to time is borne out by our European accounts. The severity of such discrimination depended largely on the attitude of the individual governor and/or the imperial policy which he was called upon to enforce. Such discrimination seems to have been particularly enforced during some parts of Aurangzeb's reign. It is also obvious that the system of taxation bore heavily upon the poorer classes and the Banias lived in a constant fear of extortion, expropriation, despotism and tyranny. While the poor artisan and servant class lived not far above the subsistence level the Bania made great profits only to hoard and conceal his wealth. The Muslims seem to have been generally favoured and lived comparatively well though among them too the contrasts between the wealthy merchants and bureaucratic classes and the average Muslim could have been as striking as among other religious groups. Both as a matter of safety and convenience the government, as a general rule, tended

to leave the average citizen alone as far as possible and allow custom and traditional institutions of the various groups to function in their own way. In its law and order functions the city, excepting certain periods, was made secure though through the second half of the century the law and order situation seems to have begun to deteriorate. The highways were always beset with risks such as the operations of highwaymen (called Rajputs or *Girasias* in European accounts) and the general decline and disintegration of the Mughal political system from the 1660s onward affected life in the city along with other areas of western India. The Maratha rebellion particularly exposed the hollowness of the claim of *Pax Mughalica*. The Government took much from the citizens but seems to have contributed proportionately much less to the economic prosperity and cultural advancement of the city. In spite of its enormous wealth Surat did not become a great centre of learning and culture, Muslim or Hindu-Jain, though the *Indudutam* gives an impression of the existence of a number of rich Jain shrines and the association of numerous learned monks, and Ovington speaks of the learning of the Brahmans. There is also some mention of cultivation of learning in the Persian language and literature among the richer Muslims of Surat.<sup>38</sup> The city was certainly not known for its elegant layout, pleasant streets or fine architecture. It appeared to be a typical market-town filled with merchants, warehouses, shops, bazars and *sarais*. The people seem to have been much too preoccupied with the business of existence (in the case of poorer classes) and acquiring wealth and preserving it (among the merchants). The city government functioned with a fair degree of efficiency for its age and though dishonesty, corruption and tyranny were always lurking beneath the surface of official life most of the time conditions, by and large, do not seem to have been unbearable over any sustained length of time. The presence of diverse ethnic-cultural groups such as the Hindus, Jains, Shi'as, Sunnis, Persians, Central Asians, Parsis, English, Dutch and French gave Surat a cosmopolitan spirit without giving it a cosmopolitan culture. Basically, then, Surat remained a trading centre a large part of whose prosperity was directly linked to the activities of European commercial houses. With the shifting of European interests to Bombay, Madras and Bengal and the political uncertainties created by the decline and fall of the Mughal empire in western India Surat declined in its wealth and glory by the end of the century.

SURAT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
*Governors Of Surat*

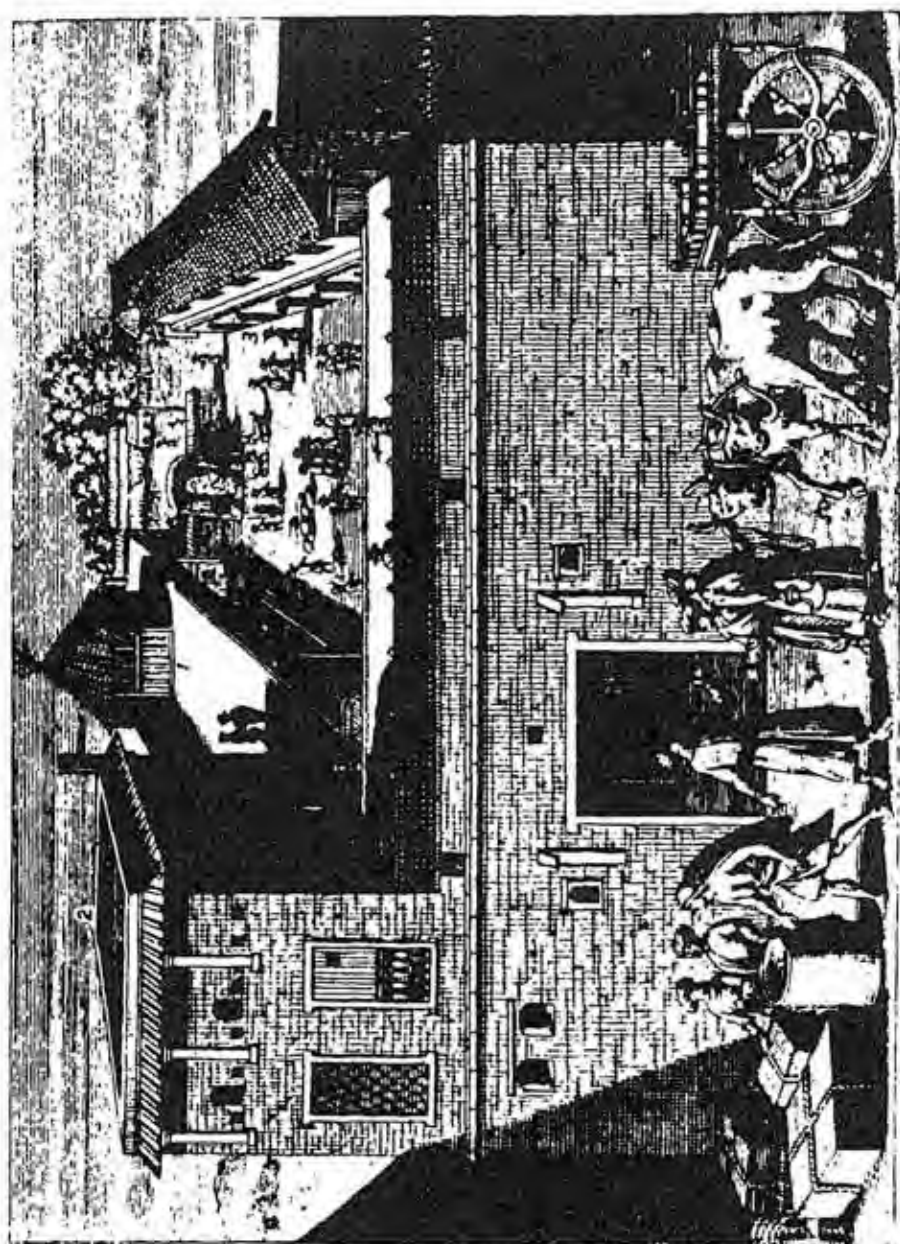
The following list is compiled from information gleaned from *Letters Received, EFI and EFI (NS), Broecke, P. V. Dam and Generale Missiven*. The dates given on the left are those mentioned in these sources; the right-hand column indicates sources.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Source</i>
1608	Mirza Nurddin	"old man"	<i>Early Travels</i> , 70
1609/12	Mukarab Khan	Former Governor of Gujarat	<i>Early Travels</i> , 63; LR, I, 23; II, 27; III, 84
1615/16	Zulfiqar Khan	favourite of Khuram died indebted	LR, III, xi, 16; IV, 78-81, 197; V, 335
1616/18	Ibrahim Khan		<i>Broecke</i> , I, 110; LR IV, 161; V, 153
1618/19	Jamal Khan		<i>EFI</i> , I, 100, 176
1619/22	Jamshed Beg	trouble with English	<i>EFI</i> , I, xx, 148, 150, 187
1622/25?	Ishaq Beg	called "arch-enemy" "Machiavellian" by English	<i>EFI</i> , I, xiv, 101, 109 111, 114, 120, 123, 126, 145; II, 39, 110, 276, 291
1625/26			
1628?	Jam Quli Beg	former commander of Fort	<i>Broecke</i> , II, 323
1628	Yaqub Khan	trouble with English Son-in-law in cloth business	<i>EFI</i> , III, 191
1629/35	Mir Musa	see chapter on Govt.	
1635/38	Masih-us-Zam	"60 years old" "extortion" dismissed	<i>EFI</i> , V, xv, 311; VI, xiii
1639/41	Mir Musa		
1641/44	Jam Quli Beg	"illiterate"	<i>EFI</i> , VII, x, 3, 160, 162
1645/46	Mirza Ali Amin		<i>EFI</i> , VII, 253, VIII, ix, 62-65, 84, 100, 130, 133
1646/49	Mir Musa	trouble with Dutch dismissed	<i>EFI</i> , VIII, xxii
1649/52	Mirza Arab		<i>EFI</i> , VIII, 282, 289, 302, 319; X, 289, 330

# THE CITY GOVERNMENT

1652/55	Hafiz Nasir		<i>EFF</i> , IX, 140, 279, 223; X, 15; Gen. Miss., III, 82, 104
1655/57?	Muhammad Amin		<i>EFF</i> , X, 56, 62; Gen. Miss., III, 82, 104
1657/60	Mirza Arab	died Oct. 28, 1660	<i>EFF</i> , X, 121, 216, 330
1660/63	Mustafa Khan	called to court to answer charges	<i>EFF</i> , X, 330; XI, 12-13; <i>Forrest</i> , I, 192-193, 205

SURAT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



BRITISH FACTORY AT SURAT



## CHAPTER IV

### *The Hinterland*

Surat's economy largely depended on the buying and selling of a wide variety of goods. The city did produce some of these goods but they formed only a very small part of its mercantile turnover. As the most important port-city on the west coast Surat drew its merchandise from as far north as Agra and south as Wengurla on the western coast. In their order of importance Broach, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Agra, Cambay, Gandevi, Navsari, Dabhol and Wengurla contributed to the prosperity of Surat. These formed the city's vast hinterland and any account of Surat's economy during the seventeenth century must take into consideration the city's economic relations with these places.

Broach was the closest important place to Surat in the supply of commodities, especially textiles, and for bleaching and dyeing of cotton fabrics. It was situated due north of Surat at a distance of some 12 miles and some 12 to 15 miles from the sea on the banks of the river Narbada. There were two ways of getting to Broach, one by way of sea from Swally and an easy passage to Narbada river and the other over a spacious plain by coach or on horseback from Surat *via* Variao. The journey from Surat to Broach took two or three days and from Broach to Baroda was a stretch that took five days. Broach is an ancient town with its history going back to the days of the Buddha for the Buddhist books claim that Buddhism had spread to Broach even during the lifetime of the Master. It is celebrated in Buddhist literature as a great port from whence ships sailed to West and Southeast Asia and the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, a Roman navigator's handbook, gives us some idea of its commerce during the century preceeding and succeeding the Christian era. Broach then was famous for its fine textiles and exported a large number of goods from the interior. It became a part of the Mughal empire along with Surat in 1572-1573 and the *Ain-i-Akbari* describes it as "a fine port. The Narbada flows past it in its course to the ocean. It is accounted a maritime town of first-rate importance. . ." The earliest Englishman to notice it was Thomas Best (1612-1614), who makes a special mention of its fine calicoes. Nicholas Downton (1614-1615) calls it "one of the pleasantest situated and strongest fortified cities in those parts, being built upon the top of a hill walled round, with a castle and fort commanding the river". Broecke also praises its trade and Pieter Van Dam describes in some detail Broach's commercial relations with overseas markets, its prosperous Bania population and the variety of goods available in its markets.<sup>1)</sup> Mandelslo says it had two large gates on the land side and two small ones toward the river through which a large quantity of timber came into town from distant parts. He refers to the suburbs almost entirely inhabited by weavers and the excellence of Broach textiles.<sup>2)</sup> Broach was also well supplied with agricultural produce and with Ankleshwar it became a centre for the making of

butter and bread. Broach was reputed to be capable of supplying 4 to 5 maunds of butter at 7½ mahmudis a maund at one demand. The quantities reported to be brought by the English for their ships range from 39 maunds to 450. The demand by European ships for bread led to the growth of the bakery industry in Broach. In August 1623 the English set up their own bakery buying 100 maunds of flour at 39 pice per maund and paid the workmen at 11 pice per maund. A report of September 1623 says that the bakery had already used up 400 maunds of flour and was still at work. The difficulties of packaging and transportation to Surat of these victuals in edible condition created a sharp fall in the industry. But Broach continued to supply large quantities of wheat, rice and butter to Surat throughout the century.

The other industry was shipbuilding. Mandelslo refers to the large quantity of timber being brought into Broach from the surrounding areas and a number of ships for the coastal trade of Surat were built at Broach. And then there were the needs of the transport industry in providing pack animals and guards for the convoys for Broach controlled the routes going to Surat to the south and Baroda, Ahmadabad and Burhanpur to the north and east.<sup>3)</sup>

But the major industry in Broach was the manufacture, bleaching and dyeing of cotton cloths of various kinds. Its *baftas* were well known all over India and in the West and Southeast Asian markets and Broach was a major supplier of *baftas* to the Surat markets. Surat merchants, as well as the English and Dutch, maintained their own agents in Broach for buying large quantities of cotton cloth and yarn for transportation to Surat and export to overseas markets. We have already referred to the great quantities of yarn bought by the English in 1630 and the protest of the weavers of Broach against such large purchases which hindered their own work, in the last chapter. From time to time due to calamities such as floods and famine the industrial production in Broach was exceedingly meagre.<sup>4)</sup>

Like its textiles the bleaching and dyeing industries in Broach were also famous. Calicoes from as far away as Agra and Lucknow were brought there for bleaching and dyeing and Broach work and rates were considered both far better and cheaper than at Surat. Another advantage for Broach was its nearness to Jambusar, some 27 miles north-north-east of Broach, which produced some indigo. This, however, was rated as inferior to that of Sarkhej (near Ahmadabad) and very much so to that of Biana (Agra region), but whenever the demand for the two latter exceeded their supplies Jambusar indigo readily found a market in Broach and more so in Surat.<sup>5)</sup>

Further north of Broach lay Baroda (22° 19' N 73° 14' E). Under Akbar it was the headquarters of the administration of a *sarkar* and had a brick fort. Downton describes it as a "drier place" by the river Vishwamitri but had orchards, tanks and ponds, "very spacious and artificially made (in form, for work and workmanship, not unlike our baths) for general use and uses; tombs and pyramids, many in open fields and private gardens". Baroda had *sarais* for travellers "with

commodious warehouses roundabout, of one story, four square, in the manner of galleries; and under them dry walks and places to feed their coach-oxen, camels, elephants and horses; but in the middle all open, like our Exchange, it being supposed that every merchant, gentleman or nobleman hath his tent or coach to sleep in, if neither, they make the best shift they can. And for their provision they bring it with them, or buy it in the town".

Baroda served as a convenient outlet for a variety of goods produced in the small towns and villages around. Dabhoi, a town 15 miles southeast of Baroda, was a well-known cotton cloth manufacturing centre and Sankheda, in the Bahadarpur *pargana* (district), specialized in the production and processing of *lac* and the manufacture of fine furniture. Merchants from Surat and the English and Dutch sent their own agents to buy goods in the Baroda market especially for the overseas trade. When the Broach market was low on supplies the Baroda market made up the deficiency and the Baroda *baftas*, broader than those of Broach, were preferred in some cases. Baroda supplied a large quantity of "Guinea stuffs" and its dyed *baftas* were greatly in demand in Sumatra. Baroda also supplied cotton yarn which was considered better than that of Broach. Like Broach, Baroda also served as a centre for the bleaching and dyeing of cottons though by 1650 the quality at Baroda was reported to have fallen. By 1669 the French had also begun to buy in the Baroda market for transportation to Surat.<sup>6)</sup>

## (2)

The most important inland city was Almadabad, capital of the *subah* (province) of Gujarat and a principal market for indigo, textiles, saltpetre, gold and silver and precious stones. The city was founded by Sultan Ahman Shah (1414-1442) of Gujarat in February-March 1414. It was located near the old town of Aswal on the banks of the Sabarmati river. Three generations of Gujarat Sultans had beautified the city with imposing mosques, palaces and market places. The city was first annexed by the Mughal emperor Humayun (1530-1540) but it was only in the reign of Akbar that it really became a part of the Mughal empire in 1572. Abul Fazl, Akbar's court chronicler, calls it "a noble city in a high state of prosperity. . . For the pleasantness of its climate and its display of the choicest productions of the whole globe it is almost unrivalled". The governor commanded an infantry force of 20,500 and 4,120 cavalry.<sup>7)</sup> John Jourdain writes of it in 1611 as "one of the fairest cities in all the Indias, both for building and strength as also for beauty, and situated in a pleasant soil, and has much trade by reason of much clothing which is made within the city. . . Likewise it is in the heart of the country for indigo, being near the town of Sarkhej, where there is much indigo made, as also in many other villages adjoining, which all goeth under the name of Sarkhej". Downton refers to the influx of "most of the nations in the world, English, Dutch, Portuguese, Jews, Armenians, Arabians, Medes and Persians, Turks and Tartains" and he

An important produce of this area was opium considered the "best in the Indies", quantities of which were bought for export to Persia and Southeast Asia. Burhanpur thus served as a marketing centre for all of Khandesh and much of Berar. But its economic relations reached much farther to Hubli and Masulipatam in the south and to Surat in the west through which it exported its textiles to overseas markets. Its ginger was sold in Sind, Punjab, Gujarat and the Deccan and it also had a large quantity of copper for sale obtained from the copper mines in the Aravali region. Its markets also sold sal ammonia (used in the manufacture of jewelry or dyeing) and saltpetre (for making gunpowder). Burhanpur had agents of the English, Dutch and French as also of the merchants of Surat buying large quantities of its commodities for internal as well as overseas markets.

But Burhanpur was perhaps unequalled as a transportation centre. Through it passed caravan routes to Agra on the one hand and to Surat on the other. The route to Agra lay along Bikangaon, Akbarpur, Mandu, Chitor and Ajmer. The caravans using it were large consisting of, at a time, as many as 700 camels and up to 20,000 bullocks. The journey from Surat to Burhanpur took about two weeks and the route lay along Arvad, Thalner, Sindkheda, Ningul, Nandurbar, Baglan (Nasik district), Vyara (Nasari district) and then on to Surat. We will deal with the details of the mechanics and economics of transportation in a later section of this chapter. We may, however, note here the economic effect of such large-scale transportation on the city.

The influx of large *caphtas* meant an accretion of an itinerant population of between 5,000 to 10,000 persons at a time. This must have stimulated demands for housing, food and fodder for men and animals, and a large segment of the population of the city must have depended for its livelihood on the transportation industry. To this must be added the demand of the Mughal army quartered there almost continuously during the period of the wars of the Mughals against the Deccan powers during the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. This army numbered between 5,000 to 50,000 at a time and had to be fed and housed by the city. The presence of Mughal officers, on the other hand, stimulated the market in luxury goods. For the economy of the city of Surat, Burhanpur was of vital importance for through it passed caravans bringing in valuable merchandise. Many Surat merchants, especially the great ones such as Virji Vora, maintained their own agents and offices in Burhanpur for purchasing and banking activities.

Finally, there was Agra, the imperial capital. Surat drew its Biana indigo and textiles from the area now covered by the states of Uttar Pradesh (Kanpur-Lucknow) and the Punjab from the Agra markets. It is not necessary to go into details of the mercantile operations in Agra as these concerned Surat but remotely. The most frequent contacts with Surat were through the government and the agencies of the big merchants in Agra.

(3)

The cities in the coastal areas were of much greater consequence to Surat. These stretched from Cambay in the north to Wengurla in the south. Tome Pires (1512-1515) calls Cambay the city "with the most trade". Situated at the head of the Gulf the approach to its harbour was full of shallows "between one and four fathoms deep. The town had the best merchandise". Duarte Barbosa (1518) calls it a "great and fair city" with "many fair houses, very lofty, with windows and roofed with tiles in our manner, well laid out with streets and fine open places, and great buildings of stone and mortar. It lies in a pleasant district, rich in supplies, and in the city dwell substantial merchants and men of great fortune, both Moors and heathen. There are also many craftsmen of mechanic trades in cunning work of many kinds, as in Flanders; and everything good cheap. Here are woven white cotton fabrics both fine and coarse, and others printed in patterns; also much silk cloth and coloured velvets of poor quality, velvety satins and taffeties, also thick carpets. The people of this land are almost white, both men and women. Many foreigners sojourn here, and they are quite white. This race is a people of great culture, accustomed to good clothing, leading a luxurious life, given to pleasure and vice". He noticed the flourishing trade in ivory articles, "very cunning work, inlaid and turned articles such as bracelets (bangles), sword-hilts, dice, chessmen and chess-boards; for there are many skillful turners who make all these, also many ivory bedsteads very cunningly turned, beads of sundry kinds, black, yellow, blue and red and many other colours, which are carried hence to many other places. Here too are many workers in stones, and makers of false stones and pearls of diverse sorts which appear to be real; also very good goldsmiths who do very fine work. They also make here very beautiful quilts and testers of beds finely worked and painted and quilted articles of dress. There are many Moorish washer-women who do very fine and cunning work. A great amount of work is also done in coral, alaquequas (carnelias) and others stones; so that in this city the best workmen in every kind of work are found".

In the account quoted above we have an almost complete list of commercial and industrial activities in the city of Cambay. Its prosperity depended as much on trade as on industrial produce. Writing toward the end of the sixteenth century (1598) the Dutchman Van Linschoten describes the commercial and industrial activities of Cambay in similar terms but makes a special mention of the excellence of the cloth and the rich trade in agricultural produce.<sup>11)</sup>

With the establishment of the Portuguese power on the island of Diu Cambay's trade was menaced by Portuguese interference which was abated only by the decline of Portuguese sea power with the arrival of the English and the Dutch in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. John Jourdain in 1611 described Cambay as "one of the best cities in all India for beauty and trade. . . the staple town where the Portugalls every year do come with many frigotts out of



all places, principally from Goa, to fetch the commodities which are bought by the Portugall factors which are leagers (resident) in Cambaia, Amdavar, Broche, and other places; all which goods being bought in any place of India are brought to Cambaia and there shipped for Goa in frigatts, which come in fleets two or three times from September to December. . .<sup>12)</sup> Of Cambay of the 1620s Della Valle calls it "indifferently large, though most of its greatness consists in suburbs without the walls, which are sufficiently spacious. 'Tis seated on the seashore, in a plain, almost in the utmost recess of that great Gulf, whereunto it gives its name. The city, that is the inner part without the suburbs, is incompassed with walls, built with plain cortines (ramparts between two bastions) and round battlements. The houses within are roofed with coverings of tiles and cisterns (gutters). . . The city hath no formed port, because it stands on a low plain, but it is called a port, by reason of great concourse of vessels thither from several parts". He then goes on to describe the sights of the city including a hospital for birds, great mosques and temples.<sup>13)</sup>

Mandelslo journeyed from Ahmadabad to Cambay in October 1638 in three days accompanied by soldiers as the way was reported to be infested by robbers. He also refers to the beauty of the city and the surrounding area and the rich trade carried on by the Banias and Muslim merchants among whom Mirza Beg was the most prominent.<sup>14)</sup> De Laet also refers to the dangers of travel on the way between Broach and Cambay. He describes Cambay "twice as big as Surat and is surrounded by a triple wall of brick. Its houses are lofty and magnificent, its streets straight and well paved, each one of them being closed by a separate gate at night. In the middle of the town are three very extensive market places. . . The port is so crowded that not infrequently 200 vessels may be seen here at one and the same time". Van Dam specially refers to the abundance and cheapness of merchandise of all sorts available in Cambay.<sup>15)</sup> Cambay had a large number of prominent Bania merchants who owned their own ships on which they sent their goods to the Persian Gulf. They had frequent contacts with Surat and a large volume of goods from Cambay was carried to Surat by coastal shipping as also by the land routes via Broach.

South of Surat lay the two towns of Navsari and Gandevi which operated within the economic sphere of the city. Broecke states that Navsari and Gandevi, along with Bulsar, were under Surat's jurisdiction; English records speak of a governor and a *kotwal* of Navsari and the *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions the three places as *mahals* and notes Navsari as the place with a manufactory of perfumed oil found nowhere else.<sup>16)</sup> Mundy informs us that from Swally Hole to the mouth of the Tapi river the distance was nine miles and from thence to Gandevi it was 21 miles. In other references the distances between Surat and Bulsar are given as 30 and 40 miles respectively. A number of small villages clustered round Navsari and Gandevi contributed their agricultural and craft produce to the two places. Both are mentioned as great places to buy fine as well as heavy cloth (sail cloth) and at a



time the English spent as many as 6000 mahmudis buying cloth in Navsari. The Navsari-Gandevi textiles were reputed to exceed in excellence those of Baroda as being better in substance and "whiting". The prices of calicoes also were cheaper by 10% to 12% and hence it was more profitable for the European merchants to buy their needs directly from these places than at Surat. Obviously the two places were renowned for their cloth production and supplied the Surat market with finer kinds of textiles. In April 1619 the governor of Surat, Ishaq Beg, issued an order forbidding the English from buying goods in Navsari probably because such activities would affect the Surat markets but the order was withdrawn in July of the same year. The Navsari *baftas* had a great market in Achin in Sumatra. Even in times of economic stress as in 1635 an English report said that the piece-goods made in Navsari were 20% cheaper than the previous year, though 50% dearer "in the times of plenty". Gandevi manufactured *dutties* the greater part of which was bought by the Surat merchants for export to Mokha.<sup>17)</sup>

Both Navsari and Gandevi were also centres of the ship-building trade. The surrounding areas supplied excellent timber and the two towns had a number of able carpenters who built very serviceable vessels especially for the coastal trade. Both the Dutch and the English had several of their frigates and other types of ships built at Gandevi and Navsari.<sup>18)</sup>

Bulsar is located south of Gandevi and also served as a market for cotton and silk stuffs. The Frenchman Abbé Carré visited Bulsar in December 1671 and gives us the following description of the place: "a small town peopled with Parsees, Hindus and some Moors. It has fine manufactures of cotton and silk stuffs. It is watered by a large river which, being near the sea, rises at each tide. We forded its stream at low tide, and for the rest of the day marched through a fine countryside, flat but covered with low thick brush wood, like our spinneys in France. I passed a pleasant time here in shooting game, with which this part of the country abounds, viz. peacocks, partridges, hares, gazelles, tigers, and wild boars". Broecke too found hunting game a pleasant diversion in the countryside around Gandevi and Navsari and we have already referred to the hunting of leopards around Surat. From these descriptions it is apparent that the whole part of Gujarat from Surat southward to Daman was still covered with thick vegetation and stocked with game.<sup>19)</sup>

South of Bulsar on the coast lay Daman which the Portuguese had occupied in 1534 and finally annexed in 1559. Van Linschoten mentions that Daman had a very good port which harboured the Portuguese armada responsible for harassing much of Gujarati shipping. Della Valle visited it in 1623 and calls it "small but of good building, and hath long, large and straight streets. . . The city is environed with strong walls of good fortification, and hath a large territory and many towns under it" and had a large Portuguese force of soldiers stationed there. Daman was also a ship-building centre capable of building small vessels of 50 to 60 tons for coastal service. These drew less than five feet of water laden, "of excellent timber such as the worms will not ruin, as they do that of England, so firmly joined

and spiked together" and capable of service for 20 years. The English had several of these built at Daman. But in terms of trade in the second half of the seventeenth century Daman was of limited importance though a few of the Surat merchants maintained their agents in Daman.<sup>20)</sup>

On the Konkan coast were located Chaul, Dabhol and Wenguria. Duarte Barbosa describes Chaul as within the mouth of a "broad and fair river" with houses of thatched roofs. He says "it has great trade, and even in the months of December, January, February and March a great concourse of ships is found here, the most part of which are from the land of Malabar, and from many other parts as well. The ships of Malabar bring hither spices, arecanuts, coco-nuts, drugs, palm-sugar, wax and emery, all of which finds here a good market, and is used in the great kingdom of Cambaya (the ships whereof come hither to search for these things), and in return they take back great store of cotton goods, cloth and other wares which are worth much in Malabar". Chaul, like Broach, has a history going back to the centuries before the Christian era and citizens of Chaul are mentioned as donors to the Buddhist establishments in Maharashtra. In the battle fought in the Chaul river in 1507 the Portuguese were worsted, and writing in 1586 Fitch says "we arrived at Chaul, which standeth in the firm land. There be two towns, the one belonging to the Portugalls and the other to the Moors. That of the Portugalls is the nearest to the sea, and commandeth the bay, and is walled round about. A little above that is the town of the Moors which is governed by a Moor king called Nizam-ul-mulk". Ships of the English East Indian Company began calling at Chaul in the 1620s and maintained sporadic trade there.<sup>21)</sup>

Of much greater importance was Dabhol. Tome Pires calls it a "rich and honoured port of call, a good port, with many ships" and Barbosa refers to its fortress with artillery. He says "It has a very good harbour, whither sail many ships of the Moors from diverse lands, to wit, from Mecca, Aden and Ormuz (which bring hither many horses) and from Cambaya, Diu and Malabar, which constantly deal here in goods of every kind with many worthy merchants of whom some in this land are of great wealth, as well Moors as Heathen. Hence they send inland great store of copper, also much quicksilver and vermilion dye; and from the inland regions great stores of cloth comes down the river and is laden on the ships, also much wheat, grain (probably millet), chick-peas and sundry other sorts of pulse. Great sums of money are gathered in here at the custom-house; the dues are collected for the king by persons whom he entertains for that end. It is a fine and well situated place; some of its houses are thatched with straw, and within on the river are very fair mosques on both banks, where there are many beautiful villages. The land is well-tilled, rich and fertile, with good ploughing and breeding of cattle". It withstood a Portuguese attack in 1507 and continued to remain free of Portuguese domination. Both Chaul and Dabhol were parts of the Bijapur kingdom.<sup>22)</sup>

The English discovered Dabhol's importance for their Asian trade right from

the beginning of their arrival at Surat. Writing in 1612 John Jourdain described Dabhol as standing "in 17 degrees, 34 minutes; variation 17 degrees. It is a bad harbour, and narrow at the entrance of the bar; there  $2\frac{1}{2}$  fathom of water at a low ebb, and at full sea  $4\frac{1}{4}$ . The going is at the southern side. You may go close by the rocks and there is the deeper water. The breadth of the bar at entering is not above a cabell's length, but presently it goeth broader and broader until you come to the town, which is about two miles within the bar. When you come before the bar there is a goodly harbour, where a ship may ride in eight fathom with a fishing line for any wind that hurt.

"The town standeth in a valley environed about with high mountains; so that it is very hot to them which are not used to it. The Governor and great men have fair houses; the rest are poor cottages, as in all other parts of India, which lives like the fishes in the sea, the greater eat the lesser. The Governor liveth in great state. His name is Agha Muhammad Raza. . . From this town every year goeth two or three ships of great burthen to the Red Sea, far richer than those that go from Surat, being supposed that the Portugalls are adventurers with them. Their ships are made Christian like, with tops and all their tackling accordingly. Also they send two ships yearly for Ormuz from this town very rich. In this town of Dabhol lyeth a factor for the Portugalls continually, who giveth passes by the Viceroy's authoritie to all their ships which go for the Red Sea, Ormuz, and other places. . . "23)

Sir Thomas Roe had explored the possibilities of English trade at Dabhol and wrote a letter to the city's governor in April 1617. He instructed his countrymen to proceed to Dabhol and if necessary compel the people there to trade. The English had found Dabhol valuable for their Red Sea trade and accordingly the English sent their agents there from time to time to buy sundry commodities. Dabhol was taken by Shivaji in February 1660 and by 1662 the Bijapur kingdom had reconciled Dabhol's loss to the Marathas. In 1695 Careri wrote about its fall to Shivaji and its trade at that time. The English found Dabhol particularly useful for the sale of their coral whenever such sales were forbidden at Surat or the prices fell on the Surat market. They could sell some tin and swordblades and buy there cotton goods for the Persian Gulf, also spices, especially pepper for Dabhol was a great mart for the trade in pepper from the interior as well as from Malabar. Dabhol ships frequently sailed to Calicut and southward to Achin. Dabhol merchants brought baftas to Broach and Surat and various commodities in Cambay for the trade southward. In a sense Dabhol competed with Surat in the West and Southeast Asian trade and also for supplies from Broach and Cambay. On the other hand Surat merchants found it profitable to buy pepper, cardamom and other spices from Dabhol. The Dutch also had sporadic commercial relations with Dabhol and from time to time the Dutch and the English found themselves in conflict. The English also seized Dabhol ships in order to put pressure on the Bijapur court either to obtain redress for grievances or gain trade concessions.<sup>24)</sup>

Wengurla lay north of Goa and was an important trading station for the Dutch where they maintained a factory during the second half of the seventeenth century. Earlier Wengurla had established itself as a centre of dyeing industry in the region and soon became a point for the diffusion of spice trade into the interior as a result of the increasing supply of Malabar pepper and spices from Indonesia brought by the Dutch. The Dutch also brought tin from Malaya and copper from Taiwan and Japan. The Surat merchants had a great interest in buying pepper and other spices from Wengurla markets for sale in Surat and their agents frequented the town from time to time. During the careers of Shivaji and his son and successor Sambhaji (1680-1689) Wengurla was often disturbed by the Maratha operation in the region.<sup>25)</sup>

## (4)

The economy of the city of Surat was based on trade in goods a small part of which was locally produced. Surat's trade links, therefore, had to extend far into the interior to the east and north and to the south. These trade links depended upon transportation by land as well as by sea. In this section we will discuss the mechanics and economics of land transport.

The transportation of goods by land was largely a seasonal activity beginning in October and going on until almost the middle of June. The roads were largely tracks made by large caravans of ox-carts and camels and during the rainy season (June to October) they were turned into impassable mud. These tracks or routes passed along numerous villages where food and fodder could be obtained and in the vicinity of which camps could be pitched for the night. They also passed along a number of large towns provided with *sarais* for merchants around which the travelling fraternity could make camp. There were two major routes connecting Surat with Agra, the north-eastern terminal for the Surat trade. One route was *via* Burhanpur which had become a major transportation centre in the seventeenth century. This was the route usually preferred by traders as it was safer than the other *via* Ahmadabad and Ajmer, sections of which were infested by robbers and organized gangs of brigands. A typical itinerary *via* the Burhanpur route to Agra would pass along the following towns and cities: from Surat to Nandurbar, Sindkheda, Thalner, Chapra, Yaval, Bahadarpur and Burhanpur. In many cases the short-haul caravan would terminate here and the merchant then would have to engage another group of animals and carters. From Burhanpur the route then went along Asirgarh, Borgaon, Sironj, Hasanpur, Gwalior, Dholpur and on to Agra. Mundy in his journey from Surat to Agra in 1630 left Surat on November 11 and made it to Burhanpur on November 30, in about 20 days, a distance of some 223 miles (actually 237 miles) according to Roe. Mundy stayed in Burhanpur until December 5 and left the city for Agra on December 6. He arrived in Agra on January 3, 1630/31, in 28 days, over a distance of 380 miles.

Of the towns on the way Nandurbar is located in the Dhulia district of Maharashtra on the southern flank of the Tapi basin and in 1630 Mundy described it as "much of this place (Nandurbar) is seated on a rock, walled, with a castle, without being a pretty Masjid on a little hill, and tanks, but for the most time dry as at this time (November of 1630, the period of the great drought and famine). The common sort of houses, as well of this town as hitherto, are little and low with mud walls. The better sort built of stone (these but few) with galleries on the outside like the balconies in Spain, with chowtries, which are open rooms, where they sit and dispatch their business. Here is also a very fair *sarai*". John Jourdain passed through Nandurbar on October 24/25, 1610 and says in his *Journal* that the castle stood on the riverside adding that the town manufactured clothes of the finer kind. A note further adds this: "A great city of the Banians called Netherberry, where is a great bazar or market, and all manner of brazen ware to be sold, as pots, kettles, candlesticks, and caldrons of four feet long, shirts of mail, swords and bucklers, lances, horses in armour of arrow proof, camels and all manner of beasts. There is also great store of cotton wools, yarns, pintadoes, callicoe lawnes, sashes for turbans for their heads, lemmons, potatoes (sweet potatoes, or possibly yams), three pounds, for a penny, and all manner of drugs. And surely cloth would be very vendible commodity there, for coarse felt is there extreme dear. Also gold and silver is there very plentiful, and these are very good people to deal withall".<sup>26)</sup>

Sindhkheda is about 24 miles north of Dhulia which Fitch calls "a great dirty town" and Jourdain "a very great village".<sup>27)</sup> The next important town was Yaval which had a population of 11,000 and called by Fitch "a great town with a fair castle" and Jourdain "a very great and strong town, with a castle. This town is of great trade for pintadoes of all sorts and many pretty stuffs and sashes". In 1630, according to Mundy the fort seems to have fallen into disrepair though Mundy noticed large scale cultivation of *pan* (leaf of the betel vine), sugarcane and Beares (*ber* or *zayphus fujuba*, a sweet fruit).<sup>28)</sup>

The next town Bahadarpur was "a large town with a fair street or two and a plentiful bazar". From Bahadarpur to Burhanpur was a distance of three courses.<sup>29)</sup> We have already dealt with the commercial importance of Burhanpur. Past Burhanpur on the way to Agra the route skirted along the famous fortress-town of Asirgarh which was conquered by Akbar in 1601. The next town of importance was Sironj which "made great quantities of excellent pintadoes or chints, much nominated and esteemed throughout India, and next in goodness to those of Masulipatam". Then came Gwalior "a town very much adorned with fair stone gates, tombs, masjids" and "an admirable, strong and beautiful castle" in the making of which "both nature and art having been very liberal". We do not need to go into the history of the city of Gwalior which contained many good *sarais* and which was a great market-place for textiles and opium.<sup>30)</sup> The traveller crossed the Chambal river at Dholpur and then went on to Agra, the imperial



capital and the centre of the indigo trade.

Mundy made the return journey to Surat in 1632/33 by a different route which passed through Rajasthan and Ahmadabad. It started out of Agra and went by Khanwa, Biana, Hindaun, Ajmer, Jalor, Ahmadabad, Baroda, Broach and then to Variao and Surat. This journey took 76 days over some 598 miles and was considered dangerous in stretches especially between Ajmer and Ahmadabad. The three important points along the route before it reached Ahmadabad were Biana, Hindaun and Ajmer. Biana was famous for its indigo considered to be the best grown in India. Hindaun was famous for its indigo and Ajmer was well known for its religious shrines and trade opportunities.<sup>31)</sup>

The nature of the trade routes determined the modes of transport for men and goods. An English report of 1665 states: "For in these countries here are no beaten roads or mending of highways but the first carts that travel must cut them with their wheels, that make it very tedious and troublesome travelling in the first of the year". The professional transporters of goods were the Banjaras who transported food-grains and other merchandise from one part of India to another. Mundy mentions seeing a caravan "of many thousand oxen laden with provisions". It was at least 1½ miles in length. He saw another with 14,000 oxen with each ox carrying four great maunds. He adds: "these Banjaras carry all their household along with them, as wives and children, one *Tanda* consisting of many families. Their course of life is somewhat like to carriers, continually driving from place to place. Their oxen are their own. They are sometimes hired by merchants, but most commonly they are the merchants themselves, buying of grain where it is cheap to be had, and carrying it to places where it is dearer, and from thence again relade themselves with anything that will yield benefit in other places, as salt, sugar, butter etc. There may be in such a *tanda* 600 or 700 persons, men, women children. Their men are very lusty, their women hardy, who in occasion of fight, lay about them like men. These people go dispersedly, driving their laden oxen before them, their journey not above 6 or 7 miles a day at most, and that in the cool. When they have unladen their oxen, they then turn them agrazing, here being ground enough, and no man to forbid them." They were a nomadic tribe much influenced by the caste system and had three distinct divisions among them. Brahman, Chhatri and Rajput castes.<sup>32)</sup>

The merchants employed other professional carriers who were not Banjaras. The arrangements were generally made with a contractor (*adwaya*) who was responsible for obtaining the necessary number of animals and carts, for feeding the cattle on the way, for arranging for guards to safeguard the security of goods transported and safe delivery of goods at the destination. The means used were pack oxen, ox-carts and camels. These were organized into a caravan or *caphila* and Mundy describes the manner of watching a *caphila* thus: "The manner of watching in *caphilas* is by the continual beating of a great kettle drum (which most commonly they carry with them), and once in a quarter or half an hour one or other cries,



*covardare* (*khabardar*), when all the rest of the people answer with a shout, *covardare*, which is as much to say as take heed. And this they do all night". The number of such oxen used in a single caraven could range from a few hundred to thousands and in the case of camels, used on the stretch from Agra to Burhanpur, we have figures ranging from 176 to 1600. If a hired camel died on the way or was otherwise incapacitated the contractor was responsible for replacement. The *Ain-i-Akhari* gives us some idea of the feed consumed by oxen and camels. For oxen used for travelling carriages a feed of six *seers* grain and grass is recommended and for a camel eight years old used for carrying loads the quantity was 7½ *seers*. The cost of oxen around Broach in 1647 is given as 7½ to 8 rupees each. Bullock-carts were much in use over the short haul, the number of such carts being used at a time between 14 to 60. Some idea of the load carried by such carts may be gained from a reference to the carrying of 2,118 *fardles* of indigo and 60 jars of butter from Surat to Broach in 1630. There was also the need for hiring boats at the numerous river-crossings. These were especially useful for carrying freight from Surat to Swally harbour and cost 50 mahmudis per boat carrying a thousand maunds apiece. Delicate goods were carried in *dolis* (travelling cots) carried on the shoulders of *Kahars* (professional carriers) who received two rupees as mentioned in an English letter of March 18, 1631. Mundy calls the *kahar* (it was also a caste) "a fellow that on a piece of bamboo (or great cane) which lies on his shoulder, will carry at either end thereof well ½ a *quintall* (cwt.), with which he will travel 20 or 30 miles a day, for he goes a kind of easy leaping pace, or as it were gently running the bamboo yielding and bending at every step, so that they carry more steady than any other kind of invention that I know. They are most commonly employed for carrying of China, crystal, or any curious (skilfully wrought) brittle ware, also of meat and drink or any liquid thing. Any great man when he travels hath many of these *Kaharas* along with him, for the purposes aforesaid".<sup>33</sup>

India had always been deficient in raising sturdy horses which could be used for long-range transportation for mercantile purposes. The most favoured horses came from Arabia and were in great demand for the Mughal armies and nobility. Indian and European merchants trading with the Persian Gulf area often imported Arab horses. The demand for good horses was steady throughout the century. An English communication of February 14, 1625 mentions the English capturing a junk from Muscat with 37 Arab horses and other goods. The English ships often transported Arab horses on their ships sailing from the Persian Gulf to Surat. The fluctuations in prices of horses is reflected in scattered notices in the English records. In 1621, the price of a horse in Surat is mentioned as Rs. 240 (600 mahmudis), in 1632 it was Rs. 400, in 1636 Rs. 280, in 1642 Rs. 375, in 1647 Rs. 250, in 1650 Rs. 400 and in 1651 Rs. 300. A great deal obviously depended on the quality of the horse but the prices indicated above give us a fair idea of the market in horses. Such expensive mounts could be used only by the very rich and with the army always on the lookout for good horses the market remained fairly

high throughout the century. Horse transport, therefore, was out of the question for commercial use.<sup>34)</sup>

The English records contain scattered pieces of information on the cost of transport of goods. A communication of February 20, 1619 mentions 338 fardles=169 camels' lading; "whereof 99 camels loadings are *pucca*. .70 camels are *cuttcha* and make *pucca* 58; so we pay for 157 camels loadings *pucca* of 9 maunds per camel, which at 14¾ rupees per camel lading *pucca* amounts to rupees 2315¼." In March 1651 the cost per camel's lading from Agra to Ahmadabad was Rs. 15 3/16 per lading. In 1618 the cost of carriage from Agra to Surat was only Rs. 1½ per great maund and each camel load cost Rs. 12½ in the same year. In the following year (1619) the cost of transportation of goods from Burhanpur to Surat was about 1½ mahmudi the great maund or nearly ½ penny per pound; from Agra 3½ mahmudis per camel. From Ahmadabad and Cambay it was 1¼ mahmudis.

The cost of transportation was further enhanced by the necessity of employing armed escorts. As mentioned earlier the Ahmadabad route was considered particularly dangerous because of the constant irruption of brigands. The European records contain frequent complaints of *caphilas* being attacked by a wide assortment of freebooters throughout the century. An English letter of November 22, 1617 states: "My passage from Surat over a large tract of this country as far as the city of Agra, I was subject to a world of dangers upon the way, it being well known that no country in the whole world is more dangerous to travel in than this" because of robbers and highwaymen *en route*. In March 1623 because of the disturbed state of the region the *shroffs* were unwilling to deal in money matters making the conveying of money from Broach to Surat difficult. In May 1623 there is a reference to the irruption of the Girasias and in 1636 the Kathis of Saurashtra were giving trouble near Dholka. In 1637 an English *caphila* was attacked by Rajput freebooters and in 1644 the Kolis attacked a caravan between Ahmadabad and Broach. The reign of Aurangzeb (1558-1707) saw an intensification of disturbances to commercial traffic as a result of a number of rebellions in the area between Surat and Burhanpur and further on to Agra. The most serious was the Maratha rebellion under Shivaji culminating in his grand sack of the city of Surat in January 1664. Thereafter the entire area was continually disturbed by alarms of the activities of Maratha horsemen.<sup>35)</sup>

Under such circumstances then the employment of mercenary guards became necessary. The Baluchis were often employed as armed guards for caravans. In 1623 six Baluchis were hired at Rs. 5 per month per person which gives us some idea of the cost involved for the service of such armed guards. Generally the large *caphilas* needed guards whose numbers ranged from 10 to 50, each unit of ten being under its own leader. These persons carried muskets besides swords, shields and spears. In 1630 a sum of Rs. 70,000 was sent from Surat to Ahmadabad with a guard of 12 musketmen. In 1647 professional soldiers were hired to accompany transport of treasure from Daman to Surat during the rainy season and were paid

1% of the value of the treasure as their pay.<sup>36)</sup>

To the cost of transportation may be added the diverse taxes levied on commodities in transit. These were covered by the term *rahdari* and were levied at various points on the way by the imperial, provincial and even local authorities. Their cost to commerce and vexatious nature were well understood by the Mughal emperors from Jahangir to Aurangzeb. Jahangir, at the very inception of his regime, issued an ordinance "forbidding the levy of cesses under the names of *tamgha* and *mir bahri* (river tolls), and other burdens which the jagirdars of every province district had imposed for their own profit". That such an act was more pious in its intentions than effective in its enforcement is shown by the fact that in less than three decades later Aurangzeb also had to issue a similar ordinance. A Mughal chronicle of Aurangzeb's reign says that the emperor "according to his usual generosity the collection of road-toll (*rahdari*) on the transit of grains and other articles was abolished forever". That "forever" scarcely held for in 1666 a Gujarat chronicle informs us that the emperor in 1666 inveighed against the demand for payment, by his officers, of numerous taxes among which were transit dues.<sup>37)</sup> The writ of the emperors was very often flouted with impunity by the local officials and lords for such taxes brought them considerable wealth. In fact, it was this system of taxation that became the constant cause of conflict between the European traders and the local regional and imperial officers throughout the century. In April 1619 the authorities at Dhatia, on the route between Burhanpur and Surat, charged a toll of one mahmudi per camel and that at Bhadwara it was a quarter of a mahmudi. When several hundred camels were involved in the course of one day one can easily surmise the amount of money realized by the authorities from such transit dues in the course of a month. A single caravan, travelling from Agra to Surat would have to pay such dues a dozen times over and an English communication of March 12, 1665 points out that the charges on the way and duties on the road amounted to 50% of the price of calicoes.<sup>38)</sup>

The conditions of transport and the imposts levied on goods in transit from one point to another raised the cost of goods at the point of export almost by 100%. This influenced the character of trade, both inland and foreign, to a great extent. The internal trade had to be in goods which were capable of bearing the additional costs and still bring in appreciable profits for the merchants to take the trouble of buying and transporting commodities over long distances which alone could break up the numerous small and localized markets and transform them into regional and/or national commerce. In the second half of the century the political conditions along the trade routes were so disturbed that the markets tended to remain, by and large, more or less localized. Foreign trade went on because of the enormous profits the export of Indian goods to Europe brought and from time to time the European merchants were quite capable of either brow beating the small local authorities or bribing them.

## (5)

Besides transportation by land there was another kind of transport involved in Surat's trade. Surat had close economic relations with areas in the Persian Gulf and the Indonesian islands and there was considerable traffic of goods in the coastal trade. These demanded the functioning of an effective arrangement of transportation of goods by boats and ships.

As mentioned before elsewhere the principal port for Surat for ocean-going ships was Swally. But smaller boats could sail right up to the city harbour where facilities also existed not only to repair ships but also to build them. The harbour certainly built these small boats used for inland transport over rivers and some of these were called *taris* and *alamadia*, the latter being used for the coastal traffic. The ships used for coastal traffic were between 50 tons and 250 tons and the term ton, at least as used in English documents of the times, referred to 60 cubic feet of cargo space and not weight. Some of the well-known Indian ships that sailed the coastal waters and up to Gombroon in the north and the Malabar coast in the south were the *Ruparel*, the *Ganjasawai* and the *Sahibi*. The English had some of their own small ships built at Surat and in 1672 the chief carpenter working on such ships was a Parsi named Cursetji. In 1672 a fleet built and assembled on the Tapi river by order of the emperor Aurangzeb was to assist the Sidi in his operations against Shivaji. Speaking of the Surat harbour John Fryer refers to Indian ships, some of which carried 30 or 40 pieces of cannon, three or four men of war, "frigats fit to row or sail, made with prows instead of beaks, more useful in rivers and creeks, than in the main." He adds: "The Emperor also has four great ships in pay always, to carry pilgrims to Mecca on free cost and bring them back from Hajj".<sup>39)</sup>

Soon after their arrival in India the English quickly appreciated the gains to be secured from the inter-Asian trade and began to transport Indian commodities to the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. Such trade and the earnings from Indian freight carried on these ships brought in considerable revenue to the English factory at Surat. In 1639 the English at Surat had quite a fleet of small country-built vessels which carried on the port-to-port trade. These Indian-built ships allowed ships from England to turn around quickly for their return voyage to England. Some of these ships were either built at Surat or frequently repaired there. Thus in 1639 the *Francis* was repaired at Surat at a cost of nearly 40,000 mahmudis. From 1636 onward the Surat factory constantly requested small ships (pinnaces) "of 100 or 200 tons with roomy holds, with a half-deck and fore-castle with 8 or 10 new sort of iron ordnance mounted light, yet serviceable against the Malabar pirates". Another request of 1644 specifically mentions passenger-carrying capacity of ships "drawing between 9 and 12 feet of water". In some cases the English also used Dutch-built "prams" (lighters) for coastal trade. The prices of some of these ships are mentioned. A small ship of 30-40 tons with a crew of 5 men was bought for

Rs. 1000 in 1639. Another ship of 250 tons was bought for Rs. 13,500 in 1647. The *Royal Welcome* built in Surat in 1661 partly from the materials of the wrecked *Welcome* and of 370 tons cost nearly £2000. In 1665 the English bought the *Hope-well* for over Rs. 22,640 but found it in very poor condition. They sold it to the well-known Armenian merchant Khwaja Minaz for about Rs. 16,000.<sup>40)</sup>

We have earlier mentioned that Broach, Gandevi and Navsari were also well-known ship-building centres because of the availability of fine timber. The Portuguese colonies of Bassein, Daman and Goa also built ships. An English letter of January 2, 1636 refers to a decision to build at Bassein two small craft: "a strong boat of 25 tons to lade our goods from Surat to carry down the river, and a small frigate, such as they in this country call a *machava*, which might not only lade goods also as occasion should require, but being fortified with two small pieces in the prow and a murder or two in the sterne should convoy all such goods as were carried down against such pilfering Malabars as might peradventure by night steal into the river with a purpose to intercept them". Another letter of March 6, 1636 mentions the building of two pinnaces at Daman of 80 or 100 tons named the *Michael* and *Francis* as also two boats for coastal traffic. In 1640 the English bought at Daman a Portuguese gallivat of 40 tons burthen (renamed *Hope*) for 2500 rials of 8. This carried a crew of 12 Englishmen and an equal number of Indian sailors. She was sent to Persia in December of that year carrying a freight producing 11,054 mahmudis which was almost the sum she cost. Some interesting sidelights on building practices are also given incidentally by the English records. Some weak ships, for instance were "doubled" with 2 ½ inch planks. There was also the practice of applying *chunam* as a preservative against worms attacking the wood of ships. Lime was daubed on the bottom of ships with the lime mixed with gingelly oil and gum sundarac and then smeared thin on the planks. This treatment, it was claimed, "hardens well in a day and becomes ultimately like stone, thereby preventing the *toredo navalis* getting at the wood and boring holes in it".<sup>41)</sup>

Many merchants of Surat owned their own ships which carried their goods to Mokha and Malaya, Sumatra and Java. They carried on an extensive coastal trade with ports in Sind, Cambay, Daman, Rajapur, Dabhol, Wengurla and Cochin. Many ships owned by Europeans also had Indian sailors as mentioned above. The names of some of the *Nakhudas* (captains) of Indian ships are known from the European records and among these were Muslims as well as Hindus, the latter fact contradicting the injunction against sea voyages as laid down on the *Book of Manu*. In addition to these ships a large number of Malabar ships also traded with Surat. The English bought large quantities of pepper in Malabar (as many as 600 to 700 tons at a time) some of which was sold in the Surat markets. The Malabar ships were called *praus*, open-decked and lateen-rigged with one or sometimes two masts. The Malabar sailors were intrepid seamen and were generally denounced by the European as "pirates". Many of the merchants of Surat (among them Virji Vora)



maintained their own agents in Malabar to buy pepper and other goods and ship them to Surat. Surat also had considerable trade with Goa and one English report stated that the Surat merchants sent to Goa goods worth ten times the amount traded by the English. A recent study points out that there were as many as 30,000 *vantias* in Goa, Diu, Daman and Bassein and overall the most important economic group in Portuguese India was that of the Gujarati Baniyas principally from Cambay and Surat. It is estimated that the coastal trade of Surat was of the order of 20,000 tons a year. The port-to-port trade, an English letter of June 10, 1626 points out, was about 50% of the trade between India and England.<sup>42)</sup>

Sea-transport played a vital role in this impressive coastal trade. It also brought into being an ancilliary industry, that of sail making for which the weavers of Navsari and Gandevi were famous. The Surat ship yards gave employment to a large body of carpenters and ship-builders, and water transport contributed in a significant manner to the economy of the city.



## CHAPTER V

### *The Markets*

The 'soul' of the city of Surat thrived in its market-places. It was there that the Bania was in his element and his qualities, noble and distressing, affected all sections of the city's population from the humble artisan to the haughty officialdom. In the streets of the city Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Armenian, Portuguese, English, Dutch and French rubbed shoulders with each other and though separated by ethnic-cultural differences found unity in a common aim, to make large profits. As early as January 25, 1613 Thomas Aldworth wrote of Surat as the "fountain-head from whence we may draw all the trade of our East Indies; for we find here merchandise which we can take and sell in nearly all parts of these Indies and also in England". Four years later the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, echoed these sentiments in his letter to the Company in England: "The Road to Swally and the port of Surat are fittest for you in all the Mughal's territory", that Surat was "the fountain and life of all the East India trade".<sup>1)</sup> Before the arrival of the European traders Surat had already established itself as the primary centre of trade on the western Indian coast drawing its goods from the inland centres and exporting them to the West and Southeast Asian markets. This commercial prosperity was further enhanced and also complicated with the coming of the Europeans. Roe stated: "There is no complaint by the Mughal's subjects that we buy not their commodity, but contrary that we buy so much that their own merchants want for the Red Sea. I know it is true. We have raised the price of all that we deal in, and now we fear that the Dutch will make it worse". He recommended that it was more profitable for the English to buy in Surat than farther inland in Agra saying, "you had better give 4 rupees in a maund more for it here than at Agra, the carriage only of a fardle is 5 or 6 rupees down, besides peons and expences on the way, and many petty duties".<sup>2)</sup> By 1619 the total value of goods shipped by the Company from Surat alone, besides a great amount of trade carried on by its servants on their own account, was about £39,923. By the same year "the net gains of the Surat trade were reckoned at £200,000 or 120% on the capital employed".<sup>3)</sup> Such profits were not only maintained but also increased as the years rolled on and the state of affairs with the Dutch was no less profitable as will be shown later in this work. Writing from Bombay in 1675 John Fryer declared, "Surat, as if Nature had designed her both by sea and land the seat of traffic, would have nothing to hinder her from being the completest mistress thereof in the whole world; if the disposition of the people be considered, what masters they are of this faculty, of buying at small, and vending at great rates, both native and exotic wares".<sup>4)</sup> In 1689 Ovington could still say, at a time when Surat was well on its way to decline, "Surat is reckoned the most famed emporium of the Indian empire, where all commodities are vendible, though they never were there seen before. The very curiosity of them will engage the expectation of the pur-

chaser to sell them again with some advantage, and will be apt to invite some other by their novelty, as they did him, to venture upon them. And the river is very commodious for the importation of foreign goods, which are brought up to the city in hoys and yachts, and country boats, with great convenience and expedition. And not only from Europe, but from China, Persia, Arabia, and other remote parts of India, ships unload abundance of all kinds of goods, for the ornament of the city, as well as enriching of the port". A year later in 1690 Careri said, "Surat is the prime mart of India, all nations in the world trading thither, no ship sailing the Indian Ocean, but what puts in there to buy, sell or load; for in the port of Surat, there is a trade not only for all sorts of spice, and among them for ginger, but of very rich gold and silver stuffs, of very fine cottons and other commodities brought thither from remote parts. There are such rich merchants, that they can load any great ship out of one of their ware-houses."<sup>5)</sup>

Surat was able to maintain its leading position as a great trading centre for three reasons. One was its strategic location on the west coast of India from whence trade naturally flowed to the north and the south. Secondly, it could draw upon the rich hinterland of Gujarat which produced large quantities of textiles, indigo, saltpetre, rice and wheat, butter and sugar. Third, it had developed the essential social and economic infra-structure so essential to organize trade in large volume and finance it adequately. Perhaps no other part of India had evolved a class so single-mindedly devoted to trade and commerce as had Gujarat in its Banias. Its streets hummed "like bees in swarms with multitudes of people" engaged in buying and selling all manner of native and exotic goods. Some of these merchants of Surat, as described elsewhere in this work, were reputed to be millionaires who not only bought and sold goods but also provided loans in thousands and thousands of rupees, had developed a system of indigenous banking and insurance and operated through a host of their own agents posted in market centres all over India.<sup>6)</sup>

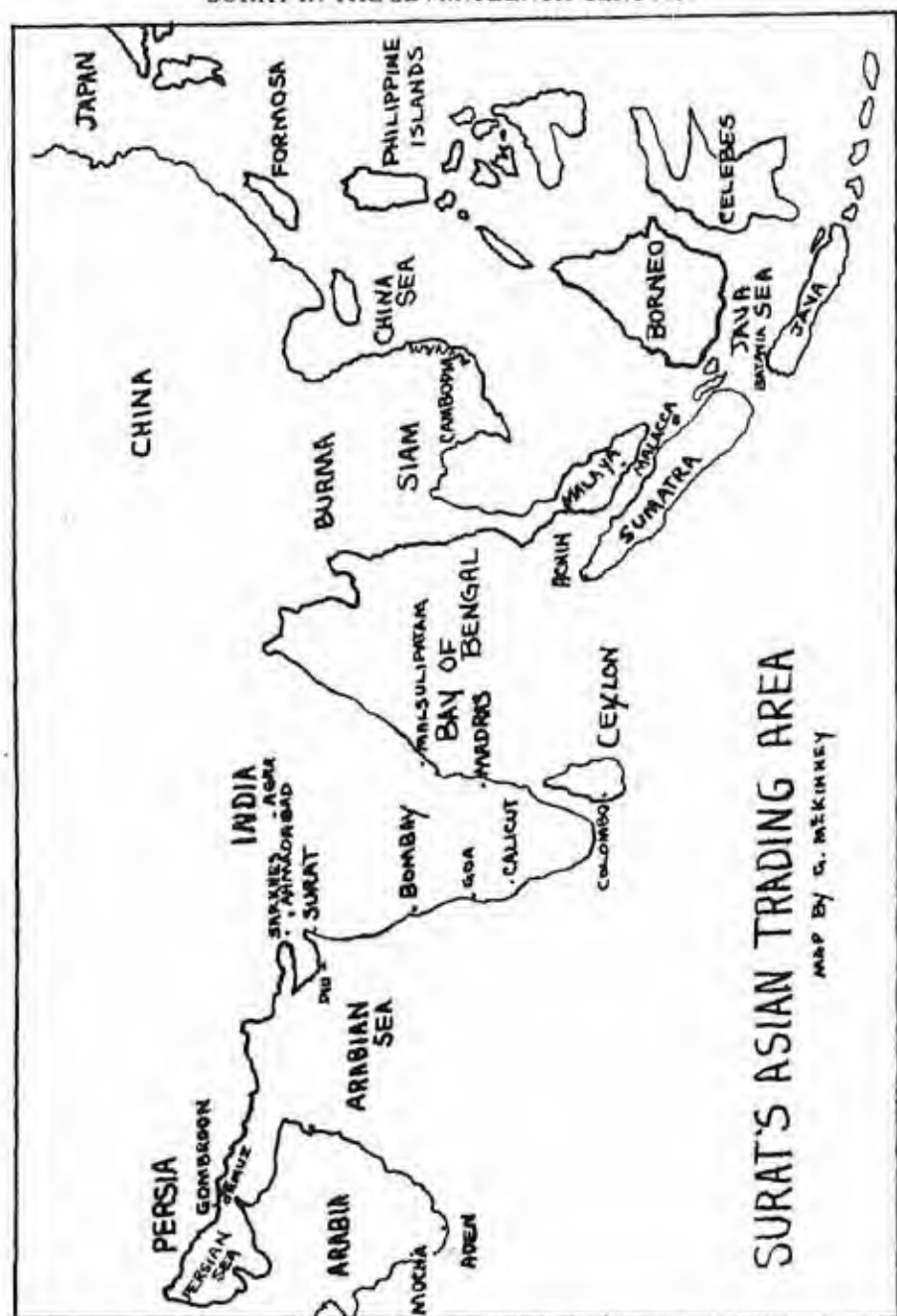
The markets of Surat, in the range of goods traded, were a major factor in Surat's economic role in seventeenth-century India. As mentioned by the European travellers quoted above their warehouses were capable of filling the holds of ships that thronged the harbour during the buying season. This season began shortly after the monsoon rains were over in October and continued well into June and as an English letter of December 26, 1638 puts it spring was the best time for buying goods in Surat. The rainy season was the slack period during which, though the prices declined, the markets were deficient in the variety of goods needed for commerce. Over the years the markets witnessed their own fluctuations and when calamities like famine (as in 1630-1632) or external attacks (Shivaji's in 1664) befell the city, trade came to a standstill. The English observed in December 1630: "This dreadful time of death and the King's continued wars with the Decans disjointed all trade out of frame; the former calamity having filled the ways with desperate multitudes, who setting their lives at naught, care not what they

enterprise so they may but purchase means for feeding, and will not dispense with the nakedest passenger. . .the wars with Deccan having stopped up all passages, the usual intercourse of trade, the ordinary travel of *caphilas* and accustomed conference of merchants to and from those parts are intercepted". Such fall in trade occurred again in 1634 and the position was restored only in 1640. Four years later in 1644 trade conditions at Surat are again spoken of as bad and in 1651 there was a general shortage of indigo and sugar because of dearth of rain. In 1657 there were bumper crops and the Banias were once again busy with "engrossing" great quantities of sugar, corn and cotton. In 1668 prices soared to unusual levels in the city from 25% to 60% and more because of stiff French competition and a year later due to the flight of the Banias as a protest against the policy of religious persecution by Aurangzeb so that credit facilities collapsed and goods went underground. In 1674 a violent gale from the south-west affected parts of Surat and in the first few days of May the loss to Surat was of the order of 3 million rupees because of damage to ships and property. In 1675 there was a general scarcity of money in Surat markets and it took a merchant about five days to raise a mere Rs. 1000. In 1676 trade was again in a bad state with a steep fall in prices and soon thereafter began the shifting of European trade from Surat to Bombay, Bengal and the eastern coast. This was because of the English acquisition of Bombay in 1665 and their desire to make it the headquarters of their trade in the west, and the recurrent alarms of Maratha raids in the region. The disturbed state of western India throughout the 1670s to the 1700s, because of the continuing Maratha revolt against the Mughal empire, seriously jeopardized Surat's trade and by the 1710s Surat had lost its pre-eminent position.<sup>7)</sup>

Surat's importance for English trade is indicated by the statistics related to the number of ships touching Surat, its share in the export trade and the number of ships chartered by the English Company from Surat and annually sent to various centres in the Indies. Bal Krishna points out that between 1658-59 and 1681-82 as many as 84 English ships arrived at Surat with a total tonnage of 32,365 and between 1658-1681 English exports from Surat amounted to 24% of exported money 62½% of goods and 33% of total exports. Between 1698 and 1707 the English sent a total of £1,174, 189 worth of stock to Surat.<sup>8)</sup> Some idea of the volume of Dutch trade from Surat is indicated by the account given by Pieter Van Dam of transactions between October 3, 1699 to May 8, 1702. The goods sent to Holland amounted to 4,286,409:7:8 in Dutch guilders or more than £389,673.<sup>9)</sup> Compared to the extent and volume of the English and Dutch commercial ventures French involvement in Surat was little more than marginal and by the end of the century the French abandoned their Surat Factory which first began to operate in the 1670s.<sup>10)</sup>

To these foreign commercial ventures must be added the volume of internal trade from Surat to points south and east and to Surat from these points. We have little direct or detailed information on this trade because of the lack of contem-

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SURAT'S ASIAN TRADING AREA

porary Gujarati commercial documents. But it will be quite reasonable to assume that this volume of trade could have been as much as 60% of the total trade of Surat. By any standards of comparison Surat stands out as the pre-eminent Indian commercial centre in the seventeenth century.

Surat also carried on a considerable trade with the two Asian regions of West and Southeast Asia. The European accounts make a frequent mention of the operation of Gujarati traders in Gombroon, Mokha, at Achin in Sumatra, in Java and Malaya. The Surat ships sailed to Mokha between March, April and May and later in the year after the monsoons carrying a large variety of merchandise such as textiles, spices, indigo, sugar, rice and wheat and bringing in return Persian and Arab goods and gold.<sup>11)</sup> The arrival of European traders deprived the Gujarati merchants of a significant part of this trade. The English involved themselves in this inter-Asian trade to solve the problem of avoiding a drain on English bullion. Sir Thomas Roe, in his letter to the English Company on November 24, 1616 advised thus: "My third proposition is for traffic into the Red Sea. It is more important than all other projects. My counsel is that one of your smallest ships, with the fittest English goods and such other as this country yields, yearly go in company of the Gujaratis and trade for themselves for money, which is taken in abundance, and return in September with them, to supply this place. The profit exceeds all the trades of India and will drive this alone."<sup>12)</sup> The advice was duly heeded and the Surat Factory began to send its own ships to the area on a regular basis. The profits were indeed spectacular ranging up to some 400% in many instances. And when necessary they also borrowed heavily from persons such as Virji Vora to keep this trade going even in times of local financial stringency.<sup>13)</sup> The English investments for such Surat-Persia trade ranged from a few thousand mahmudis to £20,000 at one time.<sup>14)</sup> In addition to these profits of trade, hitherto an Indian preserve, the English also earned large amounts of money from carrying Surat freight to Persia and in some cases made more money in a couple of such trips than what they had spent on the construction and equipment of the ships that carried the freight. The Indian traders naturally resented this European intrusion in what they regarded as their traditional and profitable sphere of trade. The Surat traders appealed to the Mughal authorities to forbid the English from breaking into the trade of their subjects and such prohibitions were issued in 1619. The brokers of Surat called a meeting and resolved to boycott all business with the English in Surat and also sent similar instructions to others at Navsari, Broach and Baroda. But in the face of the Portuguese threat to Indian shipping and the obvious English naval power which could easily protect it against the Portuguese, Surat's objections were soon swept aside.<sup>15)</sup> The English began to carry regularly Indian textiles, sugar, steel and other goods and brought back silk, frankincense and myrrh and coffee.<sup>16)</sup>

The English and the Dutch also broke into the Indian trade with Southeast Asia. As early as 1610 the English began to determine the goods most vendible in



that area and found them to be textiles of certain kinds, (Pintadoes, Buftas) and opium for which spices, gum benjamin, camphor, tin and copper could be bought for sale in India. A letter of April 21, 1616 declared: "We found the Gujaratis here (at Tiku and Achin) our most dangerous and malicious enemies" but by 1628 they had effectively taken over the trade in the area. The demand for calicoes in Bantam rose enough to warrant the reopening of the English establishments in Baroda and Ahmadabad. As Bal Krishna has estimated it, £100 first invested at Surat could bring £300 in the Moluccas, which reinvested at Bantam or Surat for the home market could produce for the English £900 in England.<sup>17)</sup>

The Dutch also invested heavily in this inter-area trade. A random sampling of figures of worth of cargo taken from Surat to Batavia and Malacca by the Dutch range from 380,433 to 1,147,511 guilders, at a time. As for the return trade between Southeast Asia and Surat the figures are equally impressive both for the English and the Dutch, particularly for the Dutch. In this case the trading connection extended to Manilla, China and Japan. Apart from the spices, the products brought in were tortoise shells from Sumatra, sappan wood from Manilla, brimstone, quicksilver, copper and porcelain from China and Japan and tin from Malaya. The profits were high up to almost 200% and with the returns from these goods in Surat and elsewhere in India the Dutch and the English could lade their cargoes for Europe at a great total profit.<sup>18)</sup> This European intrusion deprived the Indian merchants of a substantial trade which was traditionally their near monopoly. It was the duty of the Mughal government to protect the commercial interests of their subjects against foreign competition and in a few instances they issued edicts such as the prohibition of selling coral in Surat and elsewhere and against the Mokha trade in 1619. A letter of October 20, 1619 from the Surat Factory refers to this incident saying that the English had brought a quantity of coral "which the Governor and merchants, consulting together, prohibit us to sell, and have written a joint petition unto the Prince Shah Jahan and His Highness for his *nishan* to forbid its sale and our further trade in that commodity".<sup>19)</sup> But such measures were of little avail because of the Indian weaknesses on the seas whereby Indian ships needed protection by the English ships in their voyages to the north. The English used this advantage to beat down all such efforts at restrictions on their trading activities and they and the Dutch did not hesitate to use almost piratical measures in seizing Indian ships at sea in retaliation for Mughal restrictions as will be recounted elsewhere in this work. The European trade was a mixed blessing for Surat and Western India. On the one hand it deprived the Indian traders of a significant part of their legitimate share of profits from the inter-Asian trade while on the other hand it also meant increased investments in the Surat market in goods transported by the Europeans both to Europe and the Asian markets.

## (2)

We may now turn to a consideration of the market in various commodities



at Surat and places in the interior supplying the Surat markets. The most important of these was easily the trade in Indian textiles. This trade had been developing over the centuries and by the seventeenth century a high degree of specialization of functions in it had already taken place. The entire operation was distributed into a number of distinct groups based on caste divisions such as washers, beaters, dyers, spinners and weavers who manufactured the various kinds of textiles which then were taken over by the Bania for internal distribution as well as export to the Asian and European markets. Some ancillary functions associated with richer kinds of textiles were embroidery, manufacture of gold and silver thread, button-making, needlemaking and tailoring especially of heavy cloth for sails. In the case of printed fabrics artists capable of drawing figures, human and animal (horses and elephants) and expertly imprinting them on rolls of cloth were also intimately involved in the trade.<sup>20)</sup> The artisans worked in their own homes and lived in urban wards almost wholly occupied by members of their own professions. They were constantly in contact with the brokers who frequently exploited them for their own gains. In general they were poorly paid and were the first to suffer when calamities such as drought or famine hit their areas. These led to their dispersal from their usual habitations to widely separated areas in search of food and usually it took quite some time (between six months to two years) for such a depopulated locality being resettled. The English tried to localize and organize large-scale production in 1621 at Baroda where the experiment of employing 800 workmen was tried out but none too successfully. We have two instances of weavers being unwilling to co-operate in introducing changes required by the English in the manufacture of cloth. In 1628 Surat reported, "They have tried to induce the weavers to comply with the Company's wishes for the substantial making of the cloth, but the 'close striking of the threads would make the cloth shorter or use more yarn to accomplish its accustomed length, which being prejudicial to the poor workmen they will not be persuaded thereto'; for if your brokers refuse, others do buy so fast as they are made". In 1647 Swally Marine stated that the weavers were unwilling to work at the Company's specifications on broad baftas.<sup>21)</sup> It may be tempting to explain this aversion to change in terms of the effects of hide-bound tradition but the cause was simpler than that. The weavers had more orders than they could easily cope with for it was their market and to make changes in a given length or pattern would not only have meant interruption in an already busy market but also extra outlay on tools and implements without the certainty of readily selling what was produced to the new specifications as the English had the option to refuse to buy stuff which they felt did not satisfy their needs. The demand was so great that if the English did not take what the markets offered there were always the Dutch who would collect whatever was available.<sup>22)</sup>

The major varieties of textiles made were the Baftas, Semianos, Duttees, Birames, Seribuffs, Deriyabands, Pintadoes, Tapeilas, Necanees and Gigames. The

term *bafta* meant Gujarat calico, made in two varieties, broad and narrow and two qualities, coarse and fine; those exported to Europe were usually white but the Asian markets preferred them dyed red, blue or black. After the famine of 1630 they became scarce and were manufactured in many other parts of India. The usual size of narrow baftas was 14 or 14½ yards and the Broach baftas were reputed to be the first in goodness, proportion of length to breadth, and cheapness. The Dutch preferred baftas 28 yards long and the Broach baftas were narrower than those made in Baroda. But the narrow baftas made in Surat and Navsari were also described as "the most true and substantial cloth of all India".<sup>23)</sup>

The Semianoes (called after Samana in Patiala, Punjab) was a sort of calico broader than the usual calico being 1½ yards wide and especially in demand in Europe. The Duttee was a coarse cotton cloth the special quality of which was its strength and hence very useful in making sails. It came in lengths of 12 to 15 yards, in white, brown or blue colours and the demands for it ranged from some 3,000 to 10,000 pieces in one order. Dholka was the well-known centre of duttee production but excellent duttees were also made in Navsari, Gandevi and Surat. The Birames, much in demand in the Asian markets, were made of a coarse and inferior calico and dyed red, blue or black. Burhanpur was the major area for this cloth. 'Of the other varieties of textiles we may notice the cuttanies, a mixed cotton and wool fabric of satin weave used in England for making quilts. The Ahmadabad-Cambay area manufactured this cloth in great quantities. The Pintado was a painted cloth with figures "great and small, prettily representing sundry trades and occupations of the Indians, with their habits" and was used for coverings and hangings on walls. The Patola was a silk cloth, "the warp and weft being tied-dyed before weaving according to the pre-determined pattern. It had a great market in the Malay archipelago. The others such as Deriyabands, Seribuffs, Tapseilas and Necanees were varieties named after their provenance (Daryabad in Oudh, Lakhawa near Patna in Bihar) or their special qualities. The English Company attempted to have imitation Deriyabands manufactured in Surat of a size most in demand in Europe, 7/8ths of a yard broad and 13 or 14 yards long."<sup>24)</sup>

The major centres of production were in Gujarat (Surat, Gandevi, Navsari, Broach, Baroda, Almadabad, Dholka and Cambay), Madhya Pradesh (Burhanpur, Sironj, Gwalior), Uttar Pradesh (Agra, Banaras), and Bihar (Patna) though a good many varieties also came from the Punjab and Sind as well as the south (Andhra, Mysore and Tamil Nadu). The principal markets were organized in Surat where the leading Banias and their agents collected textiles from various regions for export. Production was so organized that particular varieties were largely manufactured at certain places and specific varieties were sold mainly in specified export markets such as Achin, Bantam, Malacca, Gombroon, Mokha and Basra. An English letter from Manila Bay of December 1, 1644 contains a curious piece of information. It states that Chinese merchants sold baftas dyed black to Cambodians; their cost in Surat was four mahmudis a piece but they sold to the Cambodians at

20 rials a piece. With the rise of Bombay the English tried to organize textile production on that island and by 1669 it was claimed that Bombay had already begun to make excellent cloth equal to, if not exceeding, that made at Navsari and the production is given as 6000 pieces a year. There was also considerable trade in cotton yarn, plain-reeled or cross-reeled, and large quantities were bought at Broach, Navsari, Gandevi, Ahmadabad, Baroda and Surat. Broach alone sold to the English some 10 to 12 maunds of cotton yarn a day. In 1630 the English bought so much yarn in Broach that it caused conditions of scarcity in the market. The weavers rebelled against such large buying and threatened not to sell them any baftas until the English agreed not to buy any more yarn that year. Silk fabrics were also a major item of trade in Surat. The silk came from Persia and Bengal and the silk trade was highly profitable. Ahmadabad had emerged as a major silk-weaving centre using gold and silver threads to manufacture rich and expensive fabrics. Other varieties of luxury fabrics were velvets and satins and there was quite a thriving trade in tapes-tries and hangings (*aras*).<sup>25)</sup>

Some idea of the volume of trade in textiles from Surat is given by random figures scattered throughout the Surat English Factory records. Bantam requested Surat on December 6, 1630 to furnish goods (chiefly textiles) worth 40,000 to 50,000 rials on one ship to reach Bantam in December. Earlier in 1625 an invoice for goods provided for England at Surat contains a list of pieces of textiles and other materials to the value of 1,264,389 mahmudis. In 1658 the English investment in Ahmadabad at one time amounted to 80,000 to 100,000 rupees. Bal Krishna has estimated that the annual average number of various cloths ordered in Surat by the English was 84,500 pieces. Mukerji states that the aggregate value of textile goods supplied by India, principally through Surat, was estimated in the English Parliament between 1677-1680 as worth between £200,000 and £300,000 of which calicoes alone accounted for £150,000 to £160,000. Between 1680 and 1683 about 2 million pieces of cotton goods and silk stuffs were collected by the English for the European markets every year. During 1695-96 Surat sent as many as 50,000 pieces of chintz to England.<sup>26)</sup> To these figures of cloth exported by the English must be added those bought by the Dutch competition in buying Indian textiles as a result of which prices in Surat, Broach, Baroda, Ahmadabad and Burhanpur were driven up. Pieter Van Dam has given us some idea of the volume of Dutch purchases of textiles by their Surat factory during the years 1699-1702. According to this account during these four years alone the Dutch bought about 44,000 pieces of textiles of various kinds worth around 1,400,000 guilders.<sup>27)</sup> Bal Krishna has estimated that the annual offtake of cloth pieces at Surat rose from 84,500 pieces in 1658-1664 to 247,000 pieces by 1669-1672. The average annual offtake of cotton piece goods by the English through the seventeenth century in the Surat market may reasonably be placed at 50,000 pieces and the Dutch may have bought another 25,000 pieces a year in Surat through that period. This gives us a figure of between 75,000 to 100,000 pieces annually sold by Surat merchants to the English and Dutch. To this must be added figures for internal

trade and export by Gujarati merchants to the Red Sea and Southeast Asian areas on their own account and the annual turnover could have been of the order of a quarter of a million pieces of textiles in the Surat cloth market. The monetary value of this large transaction must be reckoned in millions of rupees.<sup>28)</sup>

## (3)

Equally important was the trade in indigo. For this commodity Surat was but an outlet and its share in the trade simply meant middlemen's profits. But these profits could, from time to time, prove to be substantial. In 1629 Virji Vora bought a large quantity in exchange for pepper and in 1630 the Muslim and Bania merchants of Surat engrossed large quantities of indigo to sell it at a much higher price to the English and the Dutch.<sup>29)</sup>

Indigo was produced at Jambusar, Sarkhej, Biana, Gwalior, Lahore and the Deccan. An English letter of November 1616 states: "Indigo is made thus. In the prime June they sow it, which the rains bring up about the prime September; this they cut and it is called the Newty (*navati* ?), formerly mentioned, and is a good sort. Next year it sprouts again in the prime August, which they cut and is the best indigo called Jerry (*jari* or *jarli*=second crop). Two months after it sprouts again, which they cut and thereof they make the worst sort; and afterwards they let it grow to seed and sow again. Being cut they steep it in a cistern of water; then they draw it into another cistern, where men beat it six hours forcibly with their hands till it becomes blue, mixing therewith a little oil; then having stood another day, they draw off the water and there resteth settled at the bottom pure indigo (which some to falsify mix with dirt and sand) which they dry by degrees, first in cloths till the water be sunk from it and it be curdled; afterwards they dry it in round goblets". Writing in 1632 Peter Mundy states that "about the beginning of rains they labour the grounds and sow the seeds which by the end of it, is grown a good heights, being a little sprig bearing a little small leaf consisting of many parts."

"There is also tanks called *Chaboochaes* (cistern), places made of purpose, well plastered to keep in liquor, and may contain five or six ton each. In the bottom is a round recepticle. This place is filled with water (their being many of them together). Then cut they the said plant somewhat above the ground and throw it into the said water (the plant next year springeth up again) and there they let the said stalks and leaves remain some 48 hours, keeping it down with weight, and now and then stirring of it, from which the water receives a colour. After this they let it settle, leaving the water to run out at a passage of purpose; and in the bottom they find a substance which they gently take out, and put to dry until it becomes as hard as paste and then they form it into lumps, crushing it together in their hands, which being again put to dry, is put up ready to be sold or used.

"That which is made the first year is called Nautee (*naudha, notī*), the second

year Jeree (*jari*) and the third year Coteale (*khuthval*). Jeree is the best, then Nau-tee, and lastly, Coateale, the worst. After three years they do no more good of that plant. . . .<sup>30)</sup>

Of the two major varieties of indigo, Sarkhej and Biana, the former was made into flat patties while that at Biana in round balls. The European records use two terms for its packing; churles and fardles. The churl was again divided into two called the greater equal to five maunds and the smaller of four maunds. The term bale is also used and it seems that these "signify a package of weight and size convenient, in the case of inland marts, for transport on pack-animals and roughly equivalent, therefore, to a full or half ox or buffalo or camel-load". The method of packing for transportation is described thus: "Gujaratis pack their indigo in square chests, with two churles in every chest; which chests are made lattice-wise of a round briar very strong, yet light and good cheap; being filled into a calico bag within, and without covered with a skin, as their round churles are; which by being square and of an equal size, will stow as close as any other lading in our ships". But boards for chests were expensive and hence the custom of packing in bales came into use. Some 30 maunds of leaf produced  $1\frac{1}{2}$  maunds of indigo. But adulteration was quite common the ratio being put, by an English letter of November 28, 1644, at 10 or 12 seer (one maund = 73.76 avoirdupois and 40 seers to the maund) to each bag. Furthermore, sand was also sometimes added after the arrival of the consignment at Rander near Surat. Because of such heavy adulteration the English in 1648 tried to buy the leaf and get it ready for export under their own supervision. In 1646 Prince Aurangzeb issued strict orders in Ahmadabad against the adulteration of indigo but these seem to have had little effect. There is one instance on record at the setting up of an indigo monopoly in 1633. A contract was made between one Manohardas Danda and the Emperor's administration granting Manohar the sole right to buy all indigo grown in the empire in return for which he was to pay at the end of three years the sum of Rupees 1,100,000, viz. Rs. 200,000 out of his profits and Rs. 500,000 in repayment of a loan made to him out of the royal treasury. If the merchants refused to buy from Manohardas and indigo remained on his hands he was to be excused from all payment to the King except repayment of the loan, a bargain which would mean little risk to the contractor. This monopoly continued over a year and caused a furore among the mercantile community which lead to boycotting of indigo offered. Toward the end of 1634 Muiz-ul-Mulk, the Governor of Surat, fearing the adverse effect of such practices on Surat's revenues, urged the emperor to change the policy. On other occasions, as in 1644, the English and the Dutch combined against high prices of Agra indigo and brought the price down from Rs. 31 $\frac{1}{4}$  to Rs. 26 per maund for the best quality.<sup>31)</sup>

An indigo-growing place closest to Surat was Jambusar, some 33 miles north of Broach. The crop was poor as was also the quality and hence least sought. When other and better varieties were not available in sufficient quantities that of



Jambusar being cheap (1614 price 20 mahmudis the maund) had some buyers. Some of it was used by the Broach dyers though this again happened when there was a shortage of other kinds.<sup>32)</sup>

Much more substantial in quantity and quality was the indigo grown at Sarkhej. Writing in 1615 Nicholas Downton describes it as "distant from Ahmadabad three coase (*kos*); the town being not big, but counted the best and (most) perfect soil in all those parts for the making of indigo, all other places being accounted but counterfeit unto it. The trial of indigo made here chiefly is by water, and at Ahmadabad, Jambusar &c., by fire." The *Ain* states that Sarkhej indigo found a large market in Turkey and other countries which may have been true before the growth of the European demand. The figures of annual production at Sarkhej vary. In 1614/15 it is given as 3000 churles (or 12,000 maunds), in 1628 it was 8000 maunds which rose to 9000 maunds in 1634 and dropped to 7000 maunds in 1636. In 1644 it is stated as 6000 maunds of which the local dyers would use 1000 maunds. The average annual production could have been, thus, between 7000 to 9000 maunds depending upon rainfall. Between 1613 and 1630 the price seems to have ranged between Rs. 7 to Rs. 15 per maund, the latter figure indicating the effect of the growth of European demand.<sup>33)</sup> The famine of 1630 was disastrous to the indigo plant as to agriculture in general. A Surat letter of December 31, 1630 to the Company in London says that the indigo production around Ahmadabad was not likely to be more than 200 to 300 fardles that year whereas in former times it was never below 4000 to 5000 fardles. The effects of the famine were felt over the next two years for in 1633 the prices of Sarkhej indigo were between Rs. 23 and Rs. 25 and were expected to remain there for at least the next couple of years. The Dutch reported in 1637 Rs. 26½ to Rs. 31½ per maund the price of Sarkhej though in 1639 it dropped to Rs. 15-Rs. 18; in 1640 the best sort commanded a price of Rs. 22¼ and second sort Rs. 16¼. By the 1660s the demand for Indian indigo in Europe had fallen considerably as will be discussed below and the price of Sarkhej in 1668 was stated at Rs. 13.<sup>34)</sup>

The major indigo centre in Northern India was around Biana some two days' journey from Agra. An estimate of 1633 places the production of indigo in the whole of "Hindustan" at 15,000 maunds of which Biana produced one third. The Biana crop was regarded as the best in the quality of indigo and was consequently more expensive than Sarkhej by 70%. The quantity produced at Biana was estimated at 884,800 lbs. in good years and half of that in bad. Between 1616 and 1668 the prices ranged from Rs. 32 (1628) to Rs. 63 (1635) per maund, the median price being Rs. 35 to Rs. 45. The Gwalior region also produced some indigo where the indigo substance, when extracted from leaf, was mixed with rice-water to hold together making it hard and flinty, and dyers called it a bad and base sort. The Lahore region was another indigo area and in 1666 a new kind of indigo was reported from the Deccan called 'Larwa' which sold for Rs. 25¼ per maund and another called 'Telinge' from the Coromandel coast priced at Rs. 23 per maund.<sup>35)</sup>



Through the first half of the seventeenth century indigo was a staple of both the English and Dutch trade in Surat and the indigo producing centres. Both Companies sent their agents to Ahmadabad and Agra, where they also set up branch factories from time to time, to buy indigo directly from the producers or their brokers and had it transported by caravans to Surat for export to Europe. But sometimes the Europeans also bought their indigo in the Surat market. An English letter of March 19, 1622 reports that indigo had been stored nearly filling five houses at Rander and requests permission for hiring another house at 22 mahmudis a month for the storage of cotton goods.<sup>36)</sup>

Indian indigo began to lose ground in the second half of the seventeenth century. During 1670 and 1684 indigo prices were astonishingly stable partly because of the consistent internal demand and continuing markets in the West Asian areas. The decline in European demand began to be evident from 1648 and by 1650 the demand in England declined by more than one-third. This was due to the influx of indigo from the Barbados in the West Indies and also the cultivation of indigo in Java under the Dutch. The West Indies indigo grown under plantation conditions proved both cheaper and more reliable in its quality than the Indian and the Dutch demand came to be increasingly fulfilled by the Javanese product. By the end of the century indigo had practically lost out in the competition for foreign trade.<sup>37)</sup>

## (4)

Surat was a major centre for the distribution of spices such as pepper, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, mace and nutmeg throughout the western and northern regions of India. Pepper came from Bhatkal, Karwar, Batticola, Tuticorin, with the Deccan and Malabar being the two principal pepper growing areas in India. Rajapur was a major source for the supply of cardamom which was also grown in Malabar. In addition, pepper, cloves, mace and nutmeg were imported from the Indonesian islands where the Gujaratis carried on an extensive trade. Raybag pepper was preferred in England to that from the eastern islands and a report of 1622 states that the King of Achin permitted the Gujaratis to buy pepper in the open markets while he forced the English to buy at rates determined by him. A letter from Bantam says that in 1630 pepper could be bought there at under 30,000 rials for 400 tons and sold in Surat where it fetched 64,000 rials, that is for more than double the Bantam price. In 1627 the English could sell 300,000 lbs. of mace, nutmeg and cloves worth £8,750 for £90,000, ten times the original cost. The Dutch almost monopolized the spice trade from the Indonesian islands by bringing large cargoes of nutmeg, mace and cloves, selling them at Rs. 48, Rs. 130 and Rs. 122 per maund while cinnamon from Ceylon was sold at more than Rs. 64 in 1664. The markets in the Persian Gulf took in a large quantity of cloves (10,000 maunds in 1622) but mace had little appeal there. The prices of cloves ranged Rs. 360 (for a maund of 55 lbs.) at Agra to Rs. 55 (for a maund of 36 lbs.) at Surat in 1649. The English brought in impressive quantities of pepper; 6000 maunds in one consignment, for

instance, in 1646. Between 1669 and 1686 the English bought 15,260,000 lbs. of black pepper in Surat for export to England. Pepper came in handy "to shoot among the bales of indigo and calico" in the holds of ships and was constantly in demand throughout the century. The pepper obtained from the Deccan was found to be better than from anywhere else though the Indonesian pepper was much cheaper. The Dutch had a much larger share of the spice trade of Indonesia and from 1626 on to end of the century we find Dutch records constantly mentioning the large volume of spices brought by them to India. In 1671, for instance, their Surat establishment asked for some 75,000 lbs. of cloves and their profits on this trade were consistently large. Pieter Van Dam has given a great deal of statistical material on the quantities and prices of various spices sold in Surat especially in the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1671, for instance Mirza Masum bought 65,612 lbs. of cloves and a year later Manikseth Vora bought some 70,325 lbs. Throughout his career Virji Vora almost controlled the market in spices sending his agents into the Deccan and Malabar to buy up the crops there and also buying large quantities from the English.<sup>38)</sup>

Of other items generally included under spices but also of medicinal use were ginger (green and dry), *Bel* fruit, myrobalan, musk, *lanquash* (Java *Galangal*, a rhizome much used in Indian medicine), *hing* or asafoetida, opium, *putchocke* (a fragrant root from Kashmir in great demand in China for joss-sticks), rhubarb, saffron and coffee. The *Bel* fruit and myrobalan were used in medicinal preparations for stomach disorders. *Hing* was a favourite ingredient of all cooking in Gujarat and coffee came from the Red Sea/Persian Gulf area and had become a favourite beverage in the second half of the century. Orders for dry ginger at one time mention 50 or 60 tons at a time. A good deal of Persian wine was also in demand especially from the Mughal nobility. Dates from Arabia was another marketable commodity. Finally there was sandalwood which came from south India and was also imported from Madagascar.<sup>39)</sup>

Among food products butter, wheat, rice and sugar figured prominently both in the internal and export trade. Broach, Ankleshwar and Baroda were the main sources of butter and single orders of 400 to 500 maunds are not exceptional. Wheat came from central and northern India and was bought in terms of 2000 maunds at a time. The English tried out the manufacture of bread for their ships at Broach for some time in the 1620s. Habib has pointed out that a substantial rise in the price of wheat took place between the reign of Akbar and Aurangzeb though western India does not seem to have been much affected by it. Rice was bought for transport to Batavia and the Persian Gulf and the most favoured variety was *kamod* rice. An English letter of April 1629 from Surat states that 10,000 maunds of rice were sent to Batavia. A great deal of English private trade in rice also went on and in 1630 the English authorities in Surat had to request the Governor not to allow such privately bought rice to pass through the customs house as Company goods. Sugar came from Agra and in 1619 the English found that it was freely available in Surat at 8 or 9 mahmudis per maund which was quite cheap considering the trouble

and cost involved in buying it in Agra and transporting it to Surat under the Company's arrangements. Sugar prices rose some 40% or more in the earlier part of the century and in 1622 sugar was declared to be very dear in Surat. In 1628 its price rose to Rs. 36½ at Ahmadabad but the English went on buying large quantities (3,028 maunds at one time in 1630). It had a ready market in Persia and came in useful as ballast, along with saltpetre, in the holds of ships. By 1651 sugar was selling at Rs. 60 per maund in Agra.<sup>40)</sup>

Lac or gum-lac was one of the major products of the forests which had a large market in Persia as well as Europe. Burhanpur was a major centre of trade in this commodity. Chapra-lac was available in plentiful quantities but money had to be paid in advance for refining it. Stick-lac was much harder to obtain in large quantities for Europe because of the high profits yielded by it in the Persian markets. Gum-lac was also used in dyeing and hence was much used in the internal market. The price of gum-lac varied between Rs. 11 and Rs. 14 a maund in the 1620s and 1630s and the demand for it continued until the closing decades of the century.<sup>41)</sup>

Such large scale buying of agricultural products, especially cereals, caused a run on markets with a tendency to drive prices high. This naturally caused hardships to the local merchants and consumers. The Surat government attempted to restrict such heavy buying of food stuffs by the foreign merchants from time to time but such measures were both half-hearted and ineffective. A Surat letter of February 18, 1632 complains of the doubling of the price of wheat and adds that it was due to the Governor and one or two moneyed merchants engrossing the supply. When the Governor himself, in an unholy alliance with some moneyed merchants, was involved in manipulating the markets in food-grains he could not be expected to be too solicitous about the welfare of the common people.<sup>42)</sup>

Tobacco was one of the most interesting items in the agricultural commodities market during the seventeenth century. The plant was introduced from the New World, halfway across the globe and began to be cultivated around the turn of the century. By 1620 it was produced in enough quantities to be available for export. There were two major areas of tobacco crops, one was in Andhra and the other in parts of western and central India. Tobacco was grown at Broach and north and eastward. The first significant notice of tobacco in the English trade in India is dated in 1612 when one Robert Clarkson was employed by the Surat English Factory for curing tobacco. Throughout the seventeenth century there are references to the tobacco market in the European as well as Mughal documents. Indian tobacco was particularly exported to the west Asian areas and Surat received its tobacco from Broach, Dandipur, Gandeji and Bulsar. The English documents mention export of quantities ranging from one to 150 maunds (34 to 36 lbs. per maund) and some tobacco was also available from Masulipatam on the Andhra seaboard for the Surat markets. Tobacco yielded a 4 to 1 profit in the export markets and the quantity figuring in the English communications was but a fraction

of the total movement in this commodity. The internal market was large and ever-expanding so that by 1647 the Surat market had begun to experience a scarcity of tobacco. The Mughal government collected a large revenue from taxing the sale of tobacco and the use of tobacco had become so common by the mid-century that it had spread to all strata of the population and even to the villages. After their acquisition of Bombay after 1665 the English also collected large amounts by selling franchises to tobacco merchants.<sup>43)</sup>

## (5)

Besides agricultural products the Surat markets also dealt in a variety of metals, mineral products, coral and ivory. Of the metals, copper was perhaps the most important because of its use in making household utensils. Lead and copper were also used for making silver alloys. Surat obtained its copper from England, China and Japan. Copper was mined at Keswick and Ecton Hill (Staffordshire) under a nominal monopolist control of a company named the Mines Royal. Smelting was in the hands of another monopoly, the Society of the Mineral and Battery Works. Copper was also mined in parts of Nottinghamshire, Isleworth and Rotherhithe. The English factors were always confident of selling large quantities of English copper in spite of heavy imports of Chinese and Japanese copper by the Dutch.<sup>44)</sup> The English also began to carry Chinese and Japanese copper which they sold in the Surat markets as well as in Goa.<sup>45)</sup> The English sold copper in thousands of maunds (1000 maunds at a time in 1662) while the Dutch are reported to have sold 20,000 maunds of copper in 1661/1662. In the 1660s copper was described as "exceedingly dear" in the Surat markets. A few years later (1662 and 1664) the price dropped to more reasonable levels at between Rs. 22 and Rs. 22½ for a maund of 36 lbs. It remained in demand until the closing part of the century.<sup>46)</sup>

The English had begun to sell tin from the very beginning of their trade at Surat. A letter of February 9/15, 1619 from Surat to London states that tin sold well adding "this people are not unacquainted with the use of it; they usually have good quantity both in their own ships and by the Portingales from (the) sowards". In 1622 English tin was offered at Rs. 12 per maund and by that time tin from Achin and Malaya had already begun to make great inroads into the market in English tin, the tin from Achin being sold at Rs. 15 a maund which, considering its better quality, was cheaper than English tin. In 1636 Malacca tin was selling at 26 mahmudis per maund while the English tin could not command more than 22 or 23 mahmudis. The trade in tin went on throughout the century and in 1662 the English at Surat estimated that they could easily sell 4000 maunds. In 1663 the estimate rose to 10,000 maunds at Rs. 15 and in 1668 tin was stated to be "for the most current commodity" though the Dutch were bringing in vast quantities "from Tiku, Priaman and Peilluke, and other neighbouring parts in small vessels and prahus; it being formerly a great trade. But the Dutch have, within these 3 or 4 years last past, mastered all those other ports of Tiku, Priaman, etc. and built

forts to command them; and their conditions are that no native shall transport, or sell to any but to the Dutch themselves, any tin or what else is the growth of their country, but all be brought unto them, at the rates they have agreed upon, which is in truth for blue calicoes, other Indian clothing and spices". The only two open points left were Achin in Sumatra and Quedda, on the Malayan coast. Such monopolistic practices and dictated prices by the Dutch severely hampered trade by Indian merchants but when the Mughal authorities attempted to control markets in commodities such as lead and saltpetre the Dutch were quick to criticize the Indians for impeding "free trade"<sup>47)</sup>

Lead was another commodity regarded by the English as "our staple" It was mined in Derbyshire and in the second half of the seventeenth century there was a steady demand for it in Surat and Ahmadabad. The English tried to control its prices advising their agents in Broach and elsewhere to raise prices whenever needed. In the early part of the century it sold up to 13,000 maunds a year. The demand seemed to slacken during 1646-1658 but picked up again in 1662 when quantities to the value of £2000 could be profitably sold. In 1664 it was priced at Rs. 5 per maund with a demand for 20,000 maunds. But it had become the 'king's commodity' and the Mughal authorities in Surat and Ahmadabad insisted that it be offered to them first. This was obviously due to the increase in warfare and rising demand for ammunition by the Mughal armies battling in the Deccan under Aurangzeb. The Surat governor offered no more than 3½ mahmudis the maund and in 1673 the Surat Governor bought lead from the English and made an illicit profit on it by selling it to the Emperor for a third more than what he gave to the English. Surprisingly the price fluctuation in lead was very little for in 1614/15 it was offered at 7¼ mahmudis a maund and by 1647 it was sold at 8½ mahmudis. This may have been due to the Mughal government control over the market in lead. The Dutch, however, were able to sell it at Rs. 38 per maund in Ahmadabad in 1636 which was 10% higher than earlier though the quantity sold to the Governor of Surat was at 6¼ mahmudis.<sup>48)</sup>

Indian iron and steel have been famous for their quality and workmanship of goods manufactured from them for ages. The major centres of iron production were Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, central India and Gujarat as also Andhra and Mysore the south. The Dutch exported great quantities of iron and steel from the south to Batavia and from Surat iron and steel were also exported to the Red Sea markets. An English list of goods to be provided for Persia from Surat refers to steel "including long gades (bars and ingots) called henselle" and "round pieces called butt (lump)" and iron and steel were also shipped to Achin. But the quantities involved were small and in the second half of the seventeenth century iron and steel as export commodities from Surat were negligible.<sup>49)</sup>

The Indian fascination for gold and silver has been well known through the ages. Bernier called the Mughal empire "an abyss for gold and silver" adding, "these precious metals are not in greater plenty here than elsewhere; on the con-



trary, the inhabitants have less the appearance of a moneyed people than those of many other parts of the globe. "In the first place, a large quantity is melted, re-melted, and wasted" in making ornaments and jewelry. Bernier then goes on to describe the habit of hoarding and concealing gold and silver, especially among the Banias, an explanation for which has been given at another place in this work. John Fryer also refers to this habit of hoarding and concealment.<sup>50)</sup>

The precious metals came into Surat in two forms, ingots and coinage. Abyssinian gold sold in Surat in 1618 at 22 or 23 mahmudis a *tola* (about 185.5 grains) and the influx of gold from Arabia tended to depress gold prices from time to time. In 1628 the English succeeded in landing gold clandestinely and saved £10,000 in customs duties. In February of that year the English reported a fall in the price of gold and in November they had gold amounting to £44,000 on their hands as unvendible. The low price continued in 1629, and between 1635 and 1646 the English 20 shillings-piece advanced from 20 mahmudis to 21½ mahmudis only. The gold coins brought in were sold by weight and in 1652 the English standard gold was selling in Surat at £3. 12s. 0d. per oz. Gold was also brought in from the Guinea Coast as a part of the new investment in 1658 and gold was reported to be selling well in 1660. By 1676, however there was an unprecedented fall in gold prices partly as a result of Aurangzeb releasing Akbar's hoarded gold. The gold rupee called "sunny" formerly worth Rs. 15 was selling in 1676 at Rs. 11 or Rs. 12 and in 1677 the English lost about 3% on the sale of their gold. The English brought in gold and silver for turning them into coins at the mint. A Surat communication to London of April 29, 1636 states: "Concerning the coining of your gold and silver into the species of this country, (it) is free for us, though not safe. We should have to do with such dangerous people in the mint that we dare not adventure; nor will the most cunning merchants of these parts upon any occasion, but sell all to the *shroffs*, to whom it is most proper and are in that particular content with very small profit; or if they should in anything be unreasonable, we have present recourse unto the Governor, who will command speedy redress, whereof we have not long since had experience".<sup>51)</sup>

Great quantities of silver also came into Surat in the form of ingots and currency. The English imported chests of silver for its conversion into local silver currency at the Surat mint or for sale to magnates such as Virji Vora, and the *shroffs* or money-changers. They also brought in rials of 8. Sir William Foster explains the rial as "the Spanish dollar or rial (more correctly, the piece of eight rials) was at that time the only European coin in general esteem throughout the East Indies, owing chiefly to its uniformity of weight and purity of its silver. Two varieties were current, the old and the new, the former being coined in Spain and the latter in Mexico". The old had a plain cross on it while the new had "flower-delices" at the ends of the cross and the new was worth a little less than the old at Surat because of its novelty.<sup>52)</sup> The method of sale of specie is described in a



Surat communication of November 28, 1644; "It is a business that passeth not in private, but is constantly done in your warehouse, where your rials &c. are first told and then weighed; whereupon two or three of your servants are constantly attendant, whereof your Accountant is usually one, or (if he be upon any occasion absent) some one of Council or of trust is entrusted therewith". The general practice, a Surat letter of January 6, 1648 explains, was that "when a chest is opened, every bag is first sorted, and when the several rials are distinguished, they are exactly weighed by 22 rials at a draught; and if anything be found overweight (which seldom happens), it is allowed unto your account; and what appears to be short in weight is supplied by small weights; which every draught is laid by until the bag or 500 rials are weighed, when the want in weight is jointly poized together and allowed unto the buyers". The *shroffs* often objected to the rials brought in before exact trials were made of their alloy in the royal mint, the Company's house and the customer's house. In 1644 the Spanish rials were set at a higher price than formerly by the King of Spain, at Surat they were refined and their alloy made answerable to that of the Surat rupee the price usually paid being Rs. 212¼ to the new and Rs. 215¼ and Rs. 216¼ to the old. In 1647 complaints were made that the Peru rials were "not only very light but of a coarse alloy" and were sold at Rs. 208¼ for 100. The *shroffs* complained of their losses in such transactions to the Governor and merchants of Surat but were induced to accept them that year. In 1648, the next year, the Peru rials were sold for no more than Rs. 202¼ per 100 at which rate many thousands were disposed of by the merchants to the mint. The complaints continued in 1649 when the value declined to Rs. 197 per 100. In 1650 the *shroffs* complained that the rials of 8 had declined in value being not "so good as former times". In addition to the rials the Persian *Abbasis* and *Xerafins* (*Sharafis*) were also brought in large quantities.<sup>53</sup>

The money market was also a source of income for the *shroffs* and rich merchants of Surat. There were seasonal fluctuations in the exchange rates: in 1618 at Ahmadabad the rial in April sold at Rs. 2. 11 pice while in November and December it fetched Rs. 2.7 pice. Sometimes the values at different places varied: in 1615 the rial fetched more at Ahmadabad than at Surat. In 1609 the Seville rial fetched 5 mahmudis and by 1619 its value was 5 mahmudis and 2 pice. There were also fluctuations in Indian coinage: at the beginning of the seventeenth century the mahmudi was valued at two-fifths of the rupee; it rose to four-ninths later. The rial again sold at a much better price at Surat than either in Persia or at Masulipatam. The rial of 8 was valued in terms of English money at between 4s. 6d. in 1616-1617 and 7s. 0d. in 1630 but dropped to 5s. 0d. in 1647; it dropped further in the following years. Similarly the mahmudi was exchanged at 5 to Rs. 2 until about 1650 when it rose so that 9 mahmudis equalled Rs. 4. The rupee itself was subject to changes in values dependent upon its length of circulation and changing issues. The mahmudi circulated in Surat and neighbouring towns but Ahmadabad and other areas used the rupee, and the changing of mahmudis into rupees and vice versa also brought in significant profits for *vataw* (exchange) and

through transmission of *hundis* (drafts) for which *dasturi* (commission) was charged. The Dutch brought in their own florins which were exchanged for Indian currency.<sup>54)</sup>

A few characteristics of the markets in bullion and currencies may be noted here. First, as Lipton points out: "The peculiarity of the East India trade was that it absorbed the precious metals in excessive quantities". Secondly the hoarding and concealment of precious metals was an obsession not only with the people but also with the Mughal government which deprived the markets of a large quantity of the precious metals which otherwise could have been in circulation through investments and profits of trade and industry. Surat absorbed a significant part of precious metals as was revealed during Shivaji's raids on Surat in 1664 and 1670. According to Mukerji Surat was the most important port for the import of silver and any changes in the price-structure of silver affected the Surat markets deeply. This effect began to be felt as the century advanced as there was a steady depreciation in the price of silver. The heavy influx of silver from the New World caused a price revolution in India. This influx of bullion affected the prices of silver and gold the latter registering a sharp decline in the value of the *Muhr* in 1676 though there was a partial recovery in the 1690s. Whether this decline in the price of bullion affected the everyday life of the common people is another matter for their cost of living was pegged more to copper than silver or gold. But that it affected the richer classes, among them the merchants, seems a reasonable enough assumption.<sup>55)</sup>

We may now briefly notice the markets in other commodities. A small but sustained trade was always carried on in precious stones which were in demand by the rich merchants, the Mughal nobility and the court. Amber beads, the white agate of Cambay, bloodstones, carnelian beads and, most important of all, coral.<sup>56)</sup> Coral came from the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and later from the Mediterranean. Next to broadcloth the English found it their most vendible commodity. Coral was used in certain medicinal preparations, but chiefly in ornaments and for burying with the dead. In the early years of the opening of European trade in Surat the major cause of conflict between the Europeans and Indian merchants was the European insistence on importing the Persian coral on their own account. In 1619 the Surat merchants protested against the English for dealing in this variety of coral and in October of 1619 the Surat authorities issued a prohibitory order against the English in this matter. The English brought in large quantities, one shipment was worth £6000 and as the imperial household was also involved in this trade the cause of the Surat merchants was expeditiously taken up by the administration. The English diverted their coral to Dabhol and parts of the Deccan not under Mughal control for some time but in the end won their right to deal in that commodity because of their might at sea. Virji Vora was always ready to buy large quantities of coral. The other kinds of coral imported were the "*recaduti*" which yielded the most profit and the "*tiraglia brutura*" which was not much in demand. A third

## THE MARKETS

variety called "grezio" was much in demand in 1644 and throughout the century the demand for coral remained high and constant.<sup>57)</sup>

Quicksilver and vermilion were two other commodities which figured prominently in the Surat markets. Quicksilver was used in the process of refining gold and in making vermilion, the latter being chiefly used by the Hindus and Jains in their ritual worship and for putting marks on the foreheads, especially of the women. The temples were the major customers of vermilion and were plentifully supplied with it by their devotees. The amount of quicksilver sold annually is variously reported as 700 maunds in 1630 and its price fluctuated between Rs. 49 to Rs. 107 per maund while vermilion sold between Rs. 85 and Rs. 106 a maund. The Dutch brought quicksilver from China and Japan and quantities also came from Europe. Both commodities had a steady market throughout the century.<sup>58)</sup>

Saltpetre was used in refining gold and more importantly in the manufacture of gunpowder. As such it was declared as the 'King's commodity'. It was produced in Bijapur, Bengal and at Malapur near Ahmadabad. Until 1620 it did not attract much attention from the English and the Dutch but thereafter it became an important export commodity. The English tried to export as many as 800 tons annually if they could get it. It was convenient as ballast for ships and in 1646 Aurangzeb prohibited its sale to Europeans who might use it against Muslims. The Bohras seem to have been specially connected with the trade in saltpetre and at Malapur as many as 6000 maunds were bought at a time. The English also bought large quantities at Rajapur on the Konkan coast though Rajapur saltpetre was both inferior in quality to that of Agra and Ahmadabad and more expensive. Both Peter Mundy and Pieter Van Dam describe the method of manufacturing saltpetre for sale. Mundy went to Shergarh (on the right bank of the Jamuna, 22 miles north of Mathura), the only place, Mundy adds, where it is made and sold about Agra. They cart the raw saltpetre in clods and then soak it in water, according to Mundy. In a few days it cakes like ice on top which is then refined in boiling water with the dirt settling at the bottom. Mundy calls it the best saltpetre exported to Europe. Van Dam refers to elaborate ditches where the raw saltpetre is steeped in water, the draining off of the scum and the water and the kneading of refined saltpetre into lumps. The Ahmadabad saltpetre equalled that from Agra in quality. Saltpetre was in great demand in England, "being a commodity desired by our state and of great expense in those times of war between them and the states of Holland". In the 1660s there was a steep drop in the price of Indian saltpetre because of the influx of that commodity from the Latin American countries. But the English and the Dutch continued buying it through the latter part of the century in small quantities.<sup>59)</sup>

The other commodities in the Surat market were ivory, tortoise shells, horn of the rhinoceros and hides and skins. Ivory is mentioned in the English records as a saleable commodity from 1613 to the 1660s though Bal Krishna states that ivory ceased to be brought into India by the English from 1630 to 1648. In 1619 an

English estimate stated that some 2,000 maunds of ivory could be sold in Surat annually. In 1646 ivory was declared to be in good demand as a staple commodity at Rs. 30 per maund (40 seers) and in 1651 it fetched a profit of 28%. An English letter of March 5, 1663 from Surat stated that ivory had proved most difficult to sell. It added: "By an ancient custom, only those tusks weighing 16 seers or upwards would fetch the full price; those of 10 to 16 seers, called 'cudware' were reckoned at a third less; while all under 10 seers, known as 'burr' would only realize half price". The Mozambique tusks were considered the best; then those from Achin; then those from Guinea (which are drier and more brittle). By 1665 the price had fallen to Rs. 20 per maund and thereafter the trade was insignificant.<sup>60)</sup>

Turtle shells were imported from Sumatra and were in demand, "the blackest colour and thickest shells in most request" for making shields for soldiers while the price asked for the horn of the rhinoceros in 1818 was Rs. 5000. Probably the item was valued for its supposed medicinal value. Hides and skins were used for packing quick-silver and saltpetre and the English often sold Bulgarian (Muscovy) hides in small numbers as a luxury article. The use of hides for packing use led to the growth of the *mumjama* or wax cloth industry for this cloth was used to wrap the hides against moisture. The packaging needs also created another industry, that of the *dubba*, a kind of a tub made of hides to hold butter or ghee.<sup>61)</sup>

The account given above gives us a fair idea of the large range of the Surat commodities markets and the volume of trade in the city. Bal Krishna has given us estimates of the turnover in Surat. Between 1624 and 1629, he states, the money and goods sent from England to Surat amounted to £375,755 as against £43,980 sent to the factories in the east. The approximate value of English trade at Surat during that period was at least £220,000. During 1658 and 1681 the amount of shipping sent to Surat and Bantam is approximately equal, 84 ships in all of 32,000 tons to each place or an average of 3½ ships (1333 tons) to each of those two factories. During that period Surat claimed 33% of the total English exports from India, 24% in money and 63% in goods as against coast and Bay. During 1682 and 1690 Surat claimed 39% of English shipping to the East. Surat also was the largest exporter of cottons but Surat was gradually losing place to Madras by the end of the century. At that point there was a general decline in the percentage of English trade at Surat. To these English figures we must add the figures of the Dutch and French trade which will be dealt with in the chapter on European traders. Of figures for internal trade and external trade carried on by Indians from Surat we have little statistical information. But it may be assumed that it was as large as the foreign trade. Das Gupta has given some idea of mercantile groups and their activities in the first half of the eighteenth century which show the decline of Surat as a trading centre in India.<sup>62)</sup>

The reasons are not difficult to perceive. The Maratha revolution coupled with the internal decay of the Mughal economic system, the rise of Bombay in

the 1680s and 1690s and the shift of European trade to the south and east were some of these factors. Already in the second half of the seventeenth century the English and the Dutch had taken over a large share of the Indian trade to West and Southeast Asia as also the carrying trade of the region. The frequent interruptions in the movement of goods due to the Maratha irruptions brought the trade at Surat to a standstill from time to time as increasingly the Mughal administration's political and military incompetence left large areas of western India in a state of recurring crises. By the turn of the century Surat presented but a pale shadow of its former prosperous state and all that remained was a group of Muslim shippers and traders and a host of Banias content to act as brokers to the European traders.<sup>63)</sup>





## CHAPTER VI

### *The Merchant Community*

"The Mughal social structure", observes Radhakamal Mukerjee, "which may be likened to a pyramid standing on its apex underwent a profound transformation in the eighteenth century. The small but extremely rich extravagant upper class dwindled, and a new aristocracy composed of city merchants and traders emerged. In spite of a variety of imposts, fines and exactions a class of rich shopkeepers, traders and financiers developed in the larger towns of India".<sup>1)</sup> These were the ubiquitous Banias who, according to De Jongh, were skilled traders, sharp and prompt in payments and found along the entire coast to Goa, Coromandel and Bengal, in Persia, Ormuz and Gombroon, Diu, Dabhol and Mokha.<sup>2)</sup> In Surat, states Hamilton, the Banias "were most numerous. . . and are either merchants, bankers, brokers or pen-men, as accountants, collectors and surveyors".<sup>3)</sup> Surat, indeed, was their city for they were the makers of its prosperity. With their untiring industry, amazing powers of memory in counting and recall, sharp business acumen, unostentatious living and infinite capacity for taking pains, the Banias excelled all other Indian communities as merchants. The market was their veritable temple and the account book (*rojmel* or *chopda*) their scripture, and their business ventures drew in their web far-flung markets.

The term *Bania* covered a variety of mercantile functions. Many of these worked as brokers for their richer caste fellows as well as Indian Muslims, Armenians, Turks, Arabs, and European traders. Others were shopkeepers involved in retail trade. Many were *shroffs* or money-changers and bankers and dominating all stood the independent merchants, men of great wealth, bankers, wholesalers, insurance men and heads of business houses whose agents operated all over India as well as in West and Southeast Asia. The Bania has had a long history going back into distant centuries. At the close of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century they emerge as a fairly numerous group of merchants manning the market-places and driving profitable bargains in India and abroad. They cannot be described merely as an offspring of European commerce for many of them had established their strong independent positions before European commerce really began to affect the Indian economy. They traded with the Europeans on equal, and often on more than equal, terms and they must rather be regarded as a peculiarly Indian phenomenon which European commerce used to facilitate its own operations. No European house could have worked without the assistance of its brokers and the brokers often used their strategic position for amassing personal fortunes at the cost of the foreign traders.

The ubiquitousness of the Bania has been noticed by all European observers. As soon as European ships arrived at Swally harbour from September to March, "Banians all along the sea side pitch booths or tents and straw houses in great

numbers where they sell calicoes, Chenassetten, purcellan ware, screatores or cabinets of mother of pearl, or ebony, of ivory, agates, turquoises, heliotropes, carnelians, rice, sugar, plantains, arrack etc." Swarms of Banias frequented the European establishments working as brokers, *modis* (stewards) who were responsible for the smooth running of the household, supervising the weighers, packers, skimmers, *mazurs* (porters), peons and messengers. Each European house maintained on its staff a number of its own brokers who performed a variety of essential tasks. They looked after the loading and unloading of ships, transport of goods from Swally to Surat or Surat to Rander and Swally, cleared the goods through the customs and arranged for pack animals for caravans into the interior of the country. They were so indispensable that in one instance, in 1647, an English voyage from Mokha to Tuticorin had to be cancelled because of the illness of the broker. The English, from time to time, found them convenient for circumventing governmental restrictions. In 1619, when the Governor of Baroda put a general ban on the English buying goods there for their Red Sea cargo, they attempted to buy through their brokers. In 1632 they arranged for a *caphila* (caravan) of theirs to take their goods to the house of Surji Naik at Variao, near Surat, to avoid paying Mughal customs dues on 20,000 rials intended for Ahmadabad and Agra.<sup>4)</sup> The brokers, on their part, also used the European traders for their own designs; they used the advances in money given them by the English for their own investments, circulated defective coinage, lent money to Englishmen for private trade and controlled the weavers.<sup>5)</sup>

The broker, indeed, was the local and invaluable expert. His knowledge of the markets was intimate and sustained and where the costs were determined by the quality of goods involved, especially in such commodities as textiles and indigo, he knew far better and more than the European could ever hope. He had contacts with the transportation industry and virtually controlled the weavers and retailers of victuals and he had his own contacts with the markets in the hinterland. The broker was felt to be so indispensable that when the English moved to Bombay in the 1670s they felt they had to employ Bania brokers and two or three assistants for keeping accounts and to keep watch on the Hindu and Portuguese merchants. They had become so powerful that in 1650 they hindered Merry's succession to the Surat Presidency and in 1662 Oxenden feared that he might be poisoned by some of the brokers disciplined by him.<sup>6)</sup>

The number of brokers employed by the English, Dutch, French and the Portuguese in Surat, Agra, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Broach, Baroda, Bulsar, Gandevi, Navsari, Bombay and Rajapur runs to some 150 known names. It is neither possible nor necessary to deal with all or even most of them here. We will examine the careers of a few selected brokers to get a general idea of the nature of their functions and role in the mercantile economy of seventeenth-century Surat and other towns.

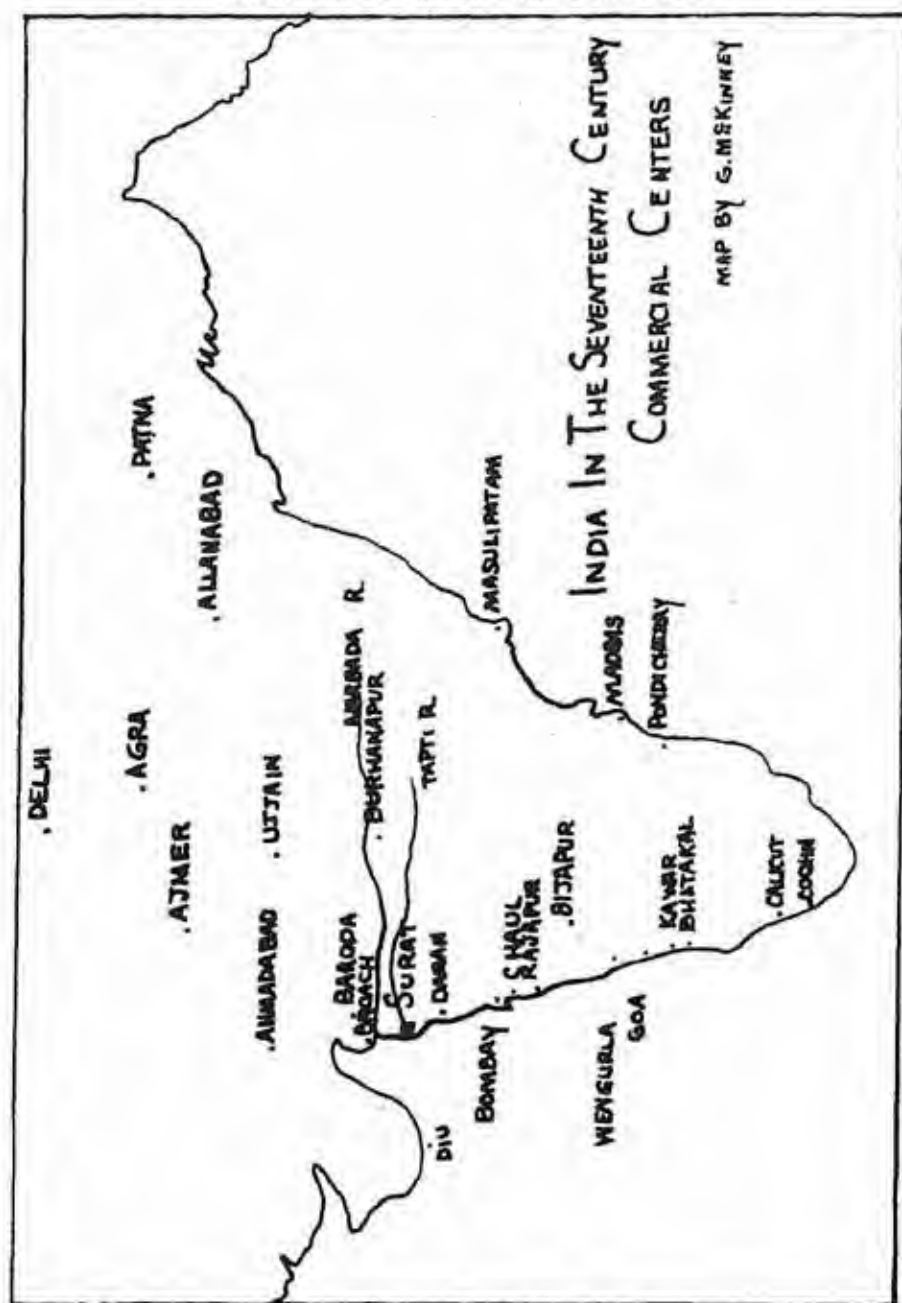
(2)

The oldest known broker is Jadu. He is first noticed as working for Captain William Hawkins in 1608 and in July 1609 his brother was employed on a salary of 8 mahmudis a month. On October 1614 he is reported to be in prison "for offering to cozen Khwaja Jahan with a false ring selling it to him for 2500 rupees" and was in prison for 20 days. He had his own *shroffs* and had his relations such as Gurudas also working for the English. During 1616 and 1617 he worked for Sir Thomas Roe as a broker and a linguist and during the subsequent years until 1632 he seems to have travelled to Agra, Burhanpur and Ahmadabad for the English. He was particularly useful for work at the imperial court at Agra and seems to have worked for the English close to half a century.<sup>7)</sup>

The best known of the early brokers was Tapidas Parekh who seems to have belonged to a fairly numerous group going by that cognomen. He is first referred to in 1609 while the last available reference to him comes in 1660 thus covering a period of more than half a century. He helped the English find living accommodation in Baroda and performed a variety of chores for their establishments. In 1634 he was paid an annual allowance of 500 mahmudis though he continued to deal on his own account in several commodities such as coral and silver, gave his own bills of exchange for Agra, dealt with the Dutch, stood sureties for Englishmen when they were in trouble, lent large amounts of money to them (Rs. 50,000), hired boats like the *Prosperous* for 5000 mahmudis for transporting his goods to Basra and back and travelled to Goa and other parts on the Company's business.<sup>8)</sup>

Another Parekh was Tulsidas, probably the brother of Tapidas, who served the English at least from 1636 to 1667. His sons Bhimiji Parekh and Kalyan Parekh continued in the Company's service probably until the end of the century. The Parekh family, thus, was associated with the English Factory at Surat throughout the seventeenth century and their successes and difficulties are generally characteristic of the mercantile broker community of this time. Tulsidas dealt in coral, textiles and lent large amounts of money which caused him no end of trouble. He was paid an annual salary (more correctly what may be called a retainer) of £25 which was about what some of the junior servants of the Company were then paid. He served as a cashier for the Company and was always spoken of as honest and industrious. In 1652 he wrote a letter in English, but signed in Gujarati, complaining of the delay in settling debts due to him in his claims against the estate of President Bretton. In a communication dated August 6, 1662 the English Factory at Surat wrote about Tulsidas, "a faithful and industrious servant of the Honourable Company. . .his deplorable condition, that having lived many years in great repute, abounding with riches, much respected for his faithful dealing, he is reduced now (by reason of the great debts owing unto him by some of our nation) to so great poverty he depends on the small profit he makes in the service of the Company which is not sufficient for the subsistence of his family". As a gesture his

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annuity of 500 mahmudis was then proposed to be revived. In 1664 he sought the help of the Surat English Factory in recovering his claims against Virji Vora so that Tulsidas may discharge his debts to the Company. The problem of Tulsidas' debts was pending until 1668.<sup>9)</sup>

In 1662 Tulsidas's son Bhimji Parekh began working as a broker for the English Company in Surat. During 1668-1671 Bhimji tried to get an English printer to print some "ancient Braminy writings". One was sent in 1674 but the experiment proved less than satisfactory as the English printer refused to teach the art to Indians. In July 1683 Bhimji was given a medal and a chain of gold (£150) for his services to the Company. In 1669 a nephew of Tulsidas Parekh was tricked into becoming a Muslim by the local Mughal authorities and this proved to be a great heartbreak to all the Banias in the town. In the same year some charges were made against Bhimji but the Surat Factory defended his ability and integrity vigorously. Earlier in 1668 Bhimji wanted to move to Bombay with his family because of religious persecution in Surat. In 1669 such persecution led a large number of Hindu merchants of Surat, led by Bhimji in September 1669, to withdraw from Surat. An English communication of November 21 of that year is worth quoting at some length; "You have been formerly advised what unsufferable tyranny the Banians endured in Surat by the force exercised by these lordly Moors on account of their religion". The Qazi and other Mughal officers derived large incomes from the Banias "to redeem their places of idolatrous worship from being defaced and their persons from their malice" and that the "general body of the Banians began to groan under their affliction and to take up resolves of flying the country". The incident of a nephew of Tulsidas Parekh being "inveigled and turned Moor" and a Persian scribe "was forcible circumscribed" and who killed himself on that account added to the apprehensions of the Hindu population. Bhimji led a deputation of five other Banias (*Panch* ?) to Gerald Aungier, who later became the maker of Bombay, to ask for asylum in Bombay. Aungier played it safe politically because of the "1,200 tons of goods here in your several factories, all of which would have been embargoed, your ships lose their voyages and lie demurrage and your island of Bombay became an eyesore to the King" and simply gave the deputation "obliging expressions of comfort and assurance of our friendship". He advised them to proceed to Ahmadabad instead and from there make "their general humble requests to the King". Then on September 23rd and 24th "all the heads of the Banian families, of what condition whatsoever, departed the town, to the number of 8,000, leaving their wives and children in Surat under charge of their brothers, or next of kin". The *Qazi* was enraged at this and called upon the Governor to turn the Banias back. The Governor was inclined to side with the Banias as he understood the important economic role they played in the life of the city and replied that they were free to go wherever they liked. The Banias then proceeded to Broach with the result that "the people in Surat suffered great want, for, the Banians having bound themselves under severe penalties not to open any of their shops without order from their Mahager (*Mahajan*), or General



Council, there was not any provision to be got; the *tanksal* (i.e. mint) and custom-house shut; no money to be procured, so much as for house expenses, much less for trade which was wholly at a standstill". The boycott lasted until December 20, 1669 when Banias returned to Surat on being assured by Aurangzeb of safety of their religion. This incident forcefully shows the organizational capabilities of the Banias and the leading role played by Bhimji in the affairs.

Bhimji Parekh (who died in 1686) and his brother Vitthal continued to work for the English in the 1670s and 1680s. In August 1672 he is mentioned as needing Rs. 50,000 to buy cotton yarn and there are also references to one Cawasjee Cawji, a Parsi servant of the brothers Parekh. Finally the Diary and Consultation Book of a committee appointed to go into the old brokers' pending accounts in February 1717/1718 has references to claims of accounts of money made by Bhimji and Vitthal and their disposition.<sup>10)</sup>

Of different kind were two brokers who worked in tandem. They were Somji Chitta and Chota Thakur and the former seems to have worked for the English close on half a century. In 1633 he was held responsible for some calico stolen by the wrappers but was released from that obligation. Somji was a specialist in the trade in *baftas* and helped Andrews, a former President at Surat, in his private deals in 1661. In December 1662 Somji was dismissed and his kinsmen, it was alleged, tried to set fire to English warehouses. Somji used to employ a large number of weavers for the manufacture of cloth to be exported on his own account. Somji also used to receive advances in money from the Company which he then gave out to the weavers "at 12, 14, 15 and 16 mahmudis per cent, rupees exchange" whereby he made a great profit for himself. He paid the weavers 5 mahmudis 3 palsa in kind where he received 6¼ per cent of textile from the Company and made enormous profits. He also was alleged to have committed fraud in buying cotton yarn. The English report states: "It is made or spun in the out villages by the poorest sort of people; from whence it is gleaned up by persons that trade in it with whom two of your brokers' relations are joined that are partners. These drive the same trade of giving out old worm-eaten decayed corn in the several neighbouring villages; which they take out in yarn, and in parcels bring it to your warehouses to sell, where these two forenamed kinsmen of Somji Chittas set as buyers in your behalf, thereby making what prizes pleases them for their own goods. . ." Somji Chitta died in 1668 owing the Company a large debt. But his influence with Virji Vora and the Surat Government was such that the latter intervened in a civil matter on behalf of Chitta's and Chota's sons.<sup>11)</sup>

The list of English complaints against Chota is equally long. In October 1623 he was imprisoned by the Mughal authorities but released on English intercession. In November 1623 he left the English and had "hidden himself" and in February 1632 he left Cambay, where he was posted, to go to Surat where his brother Gurudas was on his death bed. His action caused the English factory in Cambay some embarrassment. Gurudas was also a broker for the English and in 1631



helped Richard Wyld make a small fortune through a questionable deal in indigo. Chota, like Somji, was an expert in *baftas* and was also a linguist like him. Time and time again he was suspected of questionable deals though by 1647 he had become the Company's chief broker at Surat. An English communication of January 25, 1650 complained that "there is a tribe of family of them now in your service, all brought in by their patron, Chout Tocker (Chota Thakur), our chief house broker and linguist here in Surat, who (since Mr. Methwold's leaving India) has so wrought with your former Presidents that his kindred are become your chief brokers not only at Agra (where an arch villain has been long held in by Virji Vora) but in Ahmadabad, Sind etc. and his creatures in almost all other employments of your abroad and at home. Neither is there a possibility on the sudden to dismiss them, without drawing on you some present inconvenience. . ." In 1660 Chota was robbed around Patna and the English claimed the same privilege for him in seeking redress from the Government as was claimed for Englishmen. He was dismissed by 1662 and then he tried to enlist Virji Vora's help in forging a boycott of the English factory in reprisal. In 1664 the homes of both Somji Chitta and Chota Thakur were plundered by Shivaji during the course of his raid on Surat in early January. Until his death, sometime before 1668, Chota was involved in a dispute about English debts to him for which an interest of Rs. 328,000 was claimed. He had obviously enriched himself through his numerous transactions.

Some of the activities of Somji Chitta and Chota Thakur are indicative of some patterns of operation adopted by many brokers. They had established themselves firmly in the mechanics of European trade and especially made themselves indispensable not only for the Company's corporate trade but more so in the private trade pursued by English factors in spite of constant complaints from London.<sup>12)</sup>

One of the leading English brokers from the 1640s to the 1670s was Benidas. He was sent to many places in the south on errands which he alone could successfully accomplish. In 1645 to 1660 he often travelled to Raybag, Rajapur, Tuticorin, Goa, Calicut, Cannanore, Bijapur and through Malabar. He was also sent to negotiate matters pertaining to trade with the kings of Bijapur and to Shivaji. In November 1662, for instance, he was asked to send a Brahman to Shivaji to deal with Shivaji's Brahmans in order to prevail upon the Maratha leader for the release of English factors at Rairi. In 1652 he replaced Tulsidas Parekh since he agreed to work on a lower salary. The Company sent him a piece of scarlet cloth as a present in appreciation of his services. He was a man of considerable means as in 1652 he agreed to furnish the Surat Factory an amount up to Rs. 200,000 at  $\frac{5}{8}$  per cent per month. He owned a ship called the *Diamond* and specially arranged for the Company's lading for Persia. He seems to have also owned another ship, the *Sea-flower* which was used for coastal trade to southwestern ports such as Karwar. His fortunes, therefore were built not only on his connection with the English but also his own mercantile and banking activities.<sup>13)</sup>

The case of Panji who served the English Company for over 20 years through the 1620s into mid-century illustrate the vicissitudes of fortune to which these brokers were subject. Panji worked in Surat, Broach, Ahmadabad and Cambay and suffered physical torture three times in his career. In 1623 he had "the miserable tearing of his flesh with not less than 100 *curraes* (blows with whips)" before he was released by the Mughal authorities. In 1629 he was "soundly chabucked (whipped)" by order of Safi Khan, a Mughal official and in 1636 the Ahmadabad Factor Robinson imprisoned him for three days without rice or water until he divulged where Rs. 2000 were secreted.<sup>14)</sup>

Outside of Surat and the principal cities of Gujarat and the Agra region, European trade depended on a host of brokers in Cambay, Chaul, Rajapur, Dabhol, Danda Rajapur, Jetapur, Karwar, Hukkeri, Bijapur, Golkonda and Masulipatam as well as the Madras area. Many of them worked in the spice trade for the English and also collected assorted merchandise in textiles and other goods. Quite a few of them were wealthy merchants in their own right and traded with West Asia and Southeast Asia. Similarly there were resident Gujarati brokers in Bantam in Java, Jask, Mogustan near Bunder Abbas, Mokha, Gombroon, Suakin and Basra. Some of them were small traders specializing in selling spices while other were primarily dependent on their affiliation with the English and Dutch factories in India. The greatest broker for the Dutch was Mohandas Parekh to whom a reference is made above. Another Dutch broker was Trikam who worked in Surat as well as Broach buying textiles and indigo for the Dutch.<sup>15)</sup>

### (3)

We may now turn to the independent merchants. They were largely concentrated in and around Agra, Ahmadabad and Surat. The greatest of these was the Jain merchant prince Virji Vora whose career will be discussed in the following chapter. One of the leading merchants of the first half of the seventeenth century was Hari Vaishya. His known dates are between 1623 and 1636. He was among the signatories along with Vora to the agreement between the English in Surat and the Mughal authorities concerning treatment of English persons and property. Hari Vaishya, on this evidence, was a leader of the business community in Surat at that time. The English transported his goods in their ships to Persia from time to time. The English accounts describe him as a "principal merchant" who had his own agents in Gombroon as also in Ahmadabad, Bulsar, Gandevi and Daman, and seems to have dealt primarily in food grains. His brothers, Gopal Vaishya, Manu Vaishya and Raghu Vaishya, worked in the family business and the Vaishyas seem to have been on particularly friendly terms with the Portuguese in Daman and Goa. An English report of September 27, 1636 states that the widow of Hari Vaishya had fled Surat with her son whereupon the governor, Masih-us-Zam, imprisoned Mau Vaishya, Raghu Vaishya and another brother demanding the payment of

30,000 mahmudis (one mahmudi = 11d. or 12d.) They had to beg for the money from their friends and Hari Vaishya's widow complained to Agra about the Surat Governor's behaviour which displeased Shah Jahan a great deal.

The third notable merchant of Surat was Mohandas Parekh usually described as the broker to the Dutch. The Dutch often sold selected goods from the cargoes brought by them from Indonesia to Parekh. This included spices and tin. On one occasion, in January 1654, he tried to pass off Dutch goods as those of Muslim merchants in order to circumvent the English blockade. He seems to have died before January 1664. Shivaji, during the course of his raid on Surat in that year, spared his house since Parekh was well known for his charities to Hindus and also to Christians. Though called a broker, Parekh was obviously a man of great wealth and may have carried on his own business outside of his work for the Dutch.

Pieter Van Dam gives us the names of other brokers working for the Dutch during 1671-1698. They were Manickchand Vora, Samersingh Vora, Jagjivandas, Kissandas, Rukjidas (?), Bhagvandas, Govinddas, Samdas, Gopalji and Jivji Virji. It is not known whether the Voras mentioned in this list belonged to the family of Virji Vora.<sup>16)</sup>

The Muslim community of Surat also had its own leading merchants. The earliest noticed in English accounts was Mir Jaffar called a leading merchant of Surat in 1612. Then there were Khwaja Nasim, Khwaja Daud, Khwaja Jalaluddin, Taj Khan, Tashrif Khan, Khwaja Nizam, Khan Sharif, Abdul Latif and Mirza Muazzam. A few of these were also interested in Cambay and other parts of Gujarat and most of them traded with West as well as Southeast Asia.<sup>17)</sup> In 1628 the English accounts refer to Mirza Mahmud as principal Moor merchant of Surat who sent his goods to Batavia in English ships; he also had his own agents in Bantam for whom he sent quantities of rice and *ghee* in 1629. Mirza Mahmud traded with the Maldive Islands and with Basra in the Persian Gulf. However, in 1644 the English establishment at Swally harbour complained to London that Mirza Mahmud, "our old false friend" together with a "company of credulous Moors and Banian merchants have persuaded Mirza Jam Quali Beg, our then Governor, that the English were spreading false scare of French piracy" to get Surat freight in their ships.<sup>18)</sup>

One of the greatest of the Muslim merchants of the times was Haji Zahid Beg. In 1629 he is called "our new Shahbunder and especial friend" to whom the English owed a debt of £6000. It was not unusual for leading Muslim merchants to be appointed to the post of Customs and Port Authority who, even while occupying official positions, continued their private trading activities. He may have begun his career in the opening decades of the seventeenth century and lived until 1669. His ships plied to Aden and Basra and two of these ships were the *Salamati* and the *Mahmudi*. He drew his commodities from Agra, Diu, Cambay, Ahmadabad, Baroda, Bulsar, Gandevi and Chaul and Dabhol on the Konkan coast. He traded

extensively with Johore in Malaya where he seems to have established considerable influence with the ruling and commercial circles. In 1664 his house, along with Vora's, was plundered by the Marathas. His house was located near the *sarai* and not too far from another specially meant for Persian and Turkish merchants in the north-western part of the city. In 1666 the Dutch sold their goods to him in preference to Virji Vora for Zahid Beg had complained to the Batavian authorities that the local Dutch officials were much too friendly with Vora and accepted his bids even though they were lower than that Zahid's. In 1668 he and Vora cornered some thousands of *maunds* (one *maund* = 33 lbs.) of quicksilver "sufficient to supply the whole country for several years". After his death in 1669 his son Mirza Ma'sum carried on the family business. He made a deal with the English to buy all the copper, quicksilver, vermillion, alum, and tin from them and in 1672 he bought quantities of broadcloth and ivory from them. Zahid Beg and his family must have amassed millions of rupees worth of wealth and apart from dealing in a wide range of commodities from broadcloth to quicksilver and tin they also lent money. This must have entailed charging interest which would show that such a practice, though contrary to laws of orthodox Islam, was not uncommon among the Muslim mercantile community.<sup>19)</sup>

Surat attracted a number of Armenian merchants and the most prominent among them was Khwaja Minaz. His ship, *St. Michael*, sailed to Mokha and other ports in the region. He is described in English accounts as "an able and well reputed Armenian merchant" who bought large quantities of broadcloth from them. In 1668 he sent a ship (*Hopewell*) with a cargo worth £5000 to the Philippines and his brother Khwaja Carricoos (?) who had previously visited England was supercargo and owned one third of the stock. Like the other Bania and Muslim merchants Minaz had his own agents in Gombroon and other places overseas. In 1670 he and Nanchand Vora, grandson of Virji Vora, bought English cloth, tin and copper in large quantities. In a letter of December 1665 the English describe him as "the President for the Armenians" which obviously implies that the Armenian merchants, like the Banias, had their own organization looking after their mercantile interests and serving as a liason between them and the other mercantile communities as well as the government. In 1665 he indicated to the English that he wanted to move to Bombay "with all the rest of the merchants of his nation" but this did not come about. The reason for such a proposed move must be sought in better trading prospects in the projected English possession of the island of Bombay and governmental oppression in Surat. Of the latter we find evidence in an incident in 1672 when Minaz was "beaten with slippers and staves until they had almost killed him for writing to the king (Aurangzeb) of injustice done him by the Government." We have referred earlier to the event involving the imprisonment of the kinsmen of Hari Vaishya and this treatment of Khwaja Minaz seems to have been of a piece with it. A large number of Armenian merchants operated at other trading centres too and we find references to them in Agra, Lahore and Sind.<sup>20)</sup>

The last great Muslim merchant of the century was Abdul Gafur who, according to local legends, began his career in work associated with a mosque. He is often called Mulla which may have been because of his association with a mosque or because of his being a member of the Ismaili Bohra sect who were generally addressed as Mullas. Hamilton says of him: "Abdul Gafour, a Mahometan that I was acquainted with, drove a trade equal to the English East India Company, for I have known him fit out in a year, above twenty sail of ships between 300 and 400 tuns, and none of them had less of his own stock than 10,000 Pounds, and some of them had 25,000; and after that foreign stock was sent away, he behoved to have as much more of an inland stock for the following year's market". Manucci speaks of him as "the most powerful merchant at Surat, and owns over twenty ships of his own". Abdul Gafur, by all accounts, was a great shipping magnate and his family had, between 1707 and 1736, some 34 ships. Of these one was the *Hussaini* of 400 tons and mounted 25 guns. Abdul Gafur traded extensively with the Red Sea area and Malaya and in February 1701 Sir William Norris, Ambassador of the New English Company noticed, on his way to Aurangzeb's camp at Brahmपुरi, textile workshops at a place called "Shawgur" belonging to Abdul Gafur. An English consultation at Surat of September 21, 1700 refers to a ship of Abdul Gafur arriving at Surat with 5000 *mans* of coffee along with other cargo.

Abdul Gafur figures a great deal in the English records of the 1690s and 1700s in connection with European piracy in the Arabian sea and the damage caused to his ships by such piratical acts. These will be dealt with later in the chapter on European traders. Abdul Gafur died *circa* 1717/1718.<sup>21)</sup>

The Parsis began to participate in commerce in a significant way during the second half of the seventeenth century. A large number of Parsi merchants began to operate in Swally and some of them like Asa Vora bought pinnaces to transport their goods to Basra and other ports in the area. In 1650 the English dismissed their Bania broker Devadasi and replaced him with Hira Vora, son of Asa Vora, a principal merchant of Broach.

The leading Parsi merchant of the times was Rustamji Manekji. He was born in Surat in 1635 and belonged to a priestly family. He was a broker to the Dutch before 1681 and then figured prominently as a broker to the Portuguese and the New English Company. The Portuguese appointed him their agent in Surat for issuing passports to Indian ships and also to act as their attorney (*Vakil*) in their relations with the Mughal government in the city. He travelled to Daman, Almadabad and Goa for his patrons and seems to have amassed a fortune from his involvement in shipbuilding and trade. He died at the age of 86 in 1721 and his three sons carried on the family business after him.<sup>22)</sup>

We may briefly mention here Shantidas Jhaveri of Ahmadabad, a Jain, and the leading merchant who enjoyed a position of respect at the courts of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The English often borrowed money from him in Ahmadabad and obviously most of his money was made in the jewelry business and his operations as



a banker and a *shroff*. The German traveller John Albert de Mandelslo, who visited Surat, Ahmadabad, Agra and Cambay during 1638-1639, describes the great temple built by Shantidas in Ahmadabad. From all accounts it was a magnificent edifice which was desecrated by the prince Aurangzeb during his viceroyalty of Gujarat in 1645-1646. Shah Jahan tried to make amends for his son's bigotry but the attempt was far from successful.<sup>23)</sup>

## (4)

The Bania broker was a essential and vital link in both indigenous and foreign trade in Surat and in other commercial centres in India. He knew the artisans and their skills as well as their modes of work. His own agents fanned out over the countryside keeping in constant contact with the productive processes and though he exploited the artisans for his own enrichment, the artisan, on his part, was very dependent on the Bania for the marketing of the goods he produced. The Bania knew the country and its markets as no one else did. He was indispensable for finding transportation of goods from Swally to Surat and onward to Burhanpur and Agra. He could better negotiate with local merchants in the Deccan and the south than could his European patrons.<sup>24)</sup> His expertise concerning the quality of goods and their prices at various places was unequalled. Very often he had a command of several languages and functioned as an interpreter for the European merchants. He knew the intricacies of warehousing, the ways of the Mughal bureaucracy and was an expert in steering round obstacles when a head-on collision with them could have proved dangerous. However dissimulating and soft-spoken, gentle-mannered and obsequious, the Bania never forgot his primary objective of his life and vocation, namely, to make money for himself and make things easy for whomsoever he worked.<sup>25)</sup> He acted as an essential link between producers and consumers on the one hand and indigenous markets and overseas trade on the other. His forte was in his skill in buying and selling and keeping accounts. He knew the indigenous methods of banking well and often had enough money to lend to needy parties though at stiff rates of interest. He had even begun to use the system of insurance for goods in transit overland or across the seas. And he worked hard as perhaps no one else knew how, except the artisan. He was useful for commercial enterprise, both Indian and European, and he was ubiquitous. The English, Dutch and the French used him not only to buy and sell merchandise but also to run the working of their factories.<sup>26)</sup> Many members of his class had the making in them of future capitalists but the process was checked and twisted as much by the nature of the Government that ruled over him as the structure of society within which he had his being.

## (5)

The major avenues of amassing wealth for these Banias were trade, especially



in indigo and textiles, gum-lac and saltpetre (in which the Bohras predominated) banking, exchange of currencies and insurance of goods in transit. The usual brokerage is described at  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  from the buyer and 1% from the seller. In 1625 the English house brokers took 2% for brokerage on the calicoes brought into the Factory at Surat whereas, as the English statement goes on to say, "they formerly took but one, it is ordered that in future they shall take the 2 per cent, but shall pay half of it into the Company's account, insomuch as one of those taken by the Moor brokers is by them paid into the Custom house, and therefore is in effect but one per cent!" The practice in Baroda in 1636 is described thus that "for the consideration of one percent the English had always a broker of their own, who had immediate dependence upon, measured, kept accounts, and delivered unto the washers, and performed all other offices on our behalf. The weavers have also their particular brokers who are well contented with the allowance of one per cent; so that they never paid more than two on both sides, until one man got credit to negotiate all, and so takes what he pleases". Some brokers like Somji Chitta and Chota Thakur were accused of extorting as much as 12% brokerage from the weavers but that did not happen very often. A communication of 1665 informs how the merchants were free to buy and sell in warring camps unmolested but "whilst upon the way, they are in great danger of being robbed. And all this for small profit; for they reckon what is gotten above the common interest of  $\frac{1}{4}\%$  per cent (per month) is good gain". But most of the brokers made a good profit from brokerage when we consider that they bought and sold goods on behalf of the European houses in terms of thousands of rupees from month to month.<sup>27)</sup>

Income from arranging bank draft facilities and giving loans was both more profitable and risky. We have stray figures for rates of interests at various times during the century under review. In 1616/17 it was reported as 3% for a month on Rs. 400 borrowed in Agra for no money was available at lower rates. In 1634 the rate was  $1\frac{1}{8}\%$  per month in Surat; in 1650 it was 1% per month of 30 days. In 1652 it fluctuated between  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  to  $\frac{3}{4}\%$  per month, in 1658 it was between  $7\frac{1}{2}\%$  to 9%. The rate, of course, depended upon the availability of cash at any one time but the two extremes seem to be from 6% to 18% per annum. At times money was scarce as a report of January 1665 states that since Shivaji's raid on Surat a year before, money was hard to be had in Surat. An English letter of November 12, 1645 gives us an interesting insight into lending operations. It states: "Those that are great monied men here in town, and live only upon interest, receive from the *shroffs* no more than  $\frac{5}{8}\%$  per cent. per month. The *shroffs* they dispose of it to others at from 1 to  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  per cent running some hazard for the same and that is their gain. Now when a *shroff* (for lucre) has disposed of great sums to persons of quality at great rates, not suddenly to be called in to serve his occasions, then begin his creditors (as in other parts of the world) like sheep one to run over the neck of another, and quite stifle his reputation. Thus very opportunely to our purpose have two famous *shroffs* been served within a month, one of which failing

for over three lacs of rupees, diverse men have lost great sums and other totally undone thereby which has caused men of late to be very timorous of putting their monies into *shroffs* hands".

The amounts lent varied from a few hundred rupees to around 250,000 at a time. Great merchants such as Virji Vora were constantly called upon to give large loans and made great profits on such loans. Others, like some members of the Parekh family of Surat referred to above, had bitter experience and quite a few brokers are known to have ended their lives in penury by defaulters failing to repay the loans when needed. This happened frequently in cases where monies were lent to Englishmen who made it a practice to indulge in private trade on their own accounts against the expressed policies of the Company's authorities in London. But lending money in any case was, always, a risky business for the smaller fry as a Surat consultation of February 21, 1616/17 tells us "that the people are all generally poor and have not money to lay out, and if perhaps some few had some good quantity, yet such is their misery as they dare not be known thereof and therefore fear to lend it forth to get a little, lest they should lose all and be ransacked for more by those whose tyranny is but too well known among them". This refers to governmental cupidity wherein those who displayed their wealth were generally subjected to extortion by the regional and local Mughal bureaucracy. The natural tendency, therefore, was to conceal cash as much as possible. Men like Vora and those that belonged to his rank in wealth could not easily conceal their enormous wealth in spite of their converting a substantial part of it into gold, silver, pearls and precious stones. They suffered in political revolutions such as the one in January 1664 when Shivaji sacked Surat through the major part of a week.<sup>28)</sup>

Exchange commissions and granting facilities for transmission of drafts (*hundis*) were other sources of income for these merchants, brokers and *shroffs*. A variety of currencies was in circulation during the century. The foreign coins were the English, Dutch, Spanish and Mexican as well as Persian currencies. These gold and silver coins were taken mainly for the value of their bullion content. The *shroffs* very often underrated the value of gold or silver content and skimmed off considerable profit therefrom. A letter of November 14, 1663 from Surat complains: "The money changers to whom all silver that is imported is sold, have had essays, which in the presence of our people and the King's minister, was publicly tried in the Mint, and found one with another to issue out very coarse; whereupon we denied to stand to the proof then made. . ." Another communication of April 13, 1660 says: "The King and Governor of this place with the roguery of the *shroffs*, in the abusing of silver is apparent; and then it comes out in ingots, the *shroffs* will cozen notoriously and there is no remedy for it". In the matter of buying precious metals in ingots the Surat *shroffs* complained constantly about the coarseness of the metal and were often justified as a report from Swally of June 3, 1646 indicates: "As for *shroffs* piercing holes in the dollars, however unusual in Europe, it is customary in

these parts; nor can it be esteemed unreasonable since the false can by no means be discovered. . . .<sup>29)</sup>

Exchanges from one currency to another within India provided a profitable means of earning money for the brokers and *shroffs*. The currencies involved were the mahmudi, a silver coin of the value of an English shilling and in use in Surat and the surrounding area, the rupee (distinguished between various regnal issues) and the pagoda in circulation in the south. The rate of exchange between the mahmudi and the rupee fluctuated between 41 and 42 rupees for 100 mahmudis. But there was always the *vata*, a commission charged for changing money which in 1636 was 4 mahmudis for 100 rupees. Two years earlier the English records refer to *batta* charged for changing mahmudis into rupees as 13/14 per 100 rupees which, again, was subject to fluctuation. As a general rule the *vata* or *batta* brought in something between 4 and 8 mahmudis per 100 rupees so that if thousands of rupees or mahmudis were changed, as it often happened, the income could not be inconsiderable. The direct remittance of money from Surat to Agra in 1630 entailed a loss of 2% whereas that through Ahmadabad, by means of drafts or bills, saved money. But sending these bills also cost money; in 1634 the Agra factors charged bills of exchange upon Surat at a loss of  $8\frac{5}{8}\%$ . That is rather a heavy charge though distance always made a difference. In 1636 bills of exchange between Surat and Baroda, a short distance, cost  $\frac{7}{8}\%$ . In 1647 bills drawn in Ahmadabad on Surat were charged  $1\frac{1}{4}\%$ . In 1662 the rate between Ahmadabad and Burhanpur was Rs. 93 to 100 while at Burhanpur Bangham, the English Factor, paid  $\frac{6}{8}\%$ . The cost of remitting money in mahmudis from Broach to Baroda, a short distance, was  $\frac{3}{4}$  mahmudi per 100. In 1650 the rate of exchange between Surat and Golkonda was not less than Rs. 470 per 100 old pagodas which, when changed in Surat, would fetch only Rs. 455 so that the commission for sending a draft between Golkonda and Surat was Rs. 15 per 100 old pagodas. Sometimes the *shroffs* were suspected of bribing messengers carrying drafts and letters to delay delivery so that advantage could be taken of any rise in the rate of exchanges.<sup>30)</sup>

Insurance of goods had become a fairly well-established practice during the seventeenth century. We have scattered notices of rates of insurance. For instance, sugar sent to Gombroon from Surat was insured at  $\frac{2}{3}\%$  of its value in 1649 whereas five years earlier the rate is stated to be 5%. In 1653 the rate of insurance on goods carried on Dutch ships was 10% while for those on English ships was 6%. We have an interesting episode reported on January 18, 1654 in an English communication. This related to the non-payment of insurance on a ship captured on high-seas. The dispute was referred to a committee of four Banias who stated that the English ought to be paid. Such methods of settling mercantile disputes seem to have been common in Surat and elsewhere and throw interesting light on the Mahajan organization. Inland transportation of goods rated for insurance in 1669 was Rs. 1/2 per *maund* on lead (insurance included carriage of goods) transported from Surat to Ahmadabad. Rates increased when political conditions, such as

wars, disturbed transportation and its safety or in cases of areas where endemic banditry prevailed. These rates increased at a very high rate when the Marathas erupted into Gujarat. In 1672 Surat *shroffs* refused to insure money being sent to Bombay because of the continuing threat of Shivaji's raids.<sup>31)</sup>

## (6)

The European and Gujarati sources give us some idea of the prosperity of Surat, its times of troubles and religious and social activities of the merchant community.

We have an almost contemporary description of the city of Surat from a Sanskrit poem entitled *Indudutam* composed by the Jain monk Vinayavijaya who obviously imitates the *Meghaduta* of Kalidasa in the format of the *Indudutam*. The work refers to the harbour filled with ships flying flags of various nations, the gardens, parks and orchards of the city, its streets thronged with merchants and the spacious Gopi tank which was a great landmark of Surat. It also describes the various Jain shrines and the munificent endowments of Jain laymen. The picture of Surat that emerges from this poem is that of a rich, thriving, busy port and mercantile urban centre.<sup>32)</sup> Another Jain work confirms the richness of endowments of Jain shrines in Surat in icons and other appurtenances during the century as indicated in inscriptions.<sup>33)</sup> The life and commerce of Surat suffered almost in a catastrophic manner in the famine conditions of the early 1630s. These are described in contemporary English and Dutch accounts and almost in a graphic way in another Gujarati text. The work says that this famine separated parents from children and even men of substance had to hang their heads and beg for food. There was a large-scale exodus of people and many died on their way out of the city. The city's commerce was paralyzed for almost five years with the dispersal of merchants and artisans but the resilience of the community was such that it regained its former prosperity soon after.<sup>34)</sup>

The European records of the times speak unfavourably of the activities and practices of the native mercantile community. An English letter of August 30, 1609 says that as soon as the English ships arrived in Surat prices rose sharply and that the merchants were "subtle as the Devil". An account of 1616/1617 says the "conditions of this people is (*sic*) faithless, inconstant and covetous, the greater sort cruel and dishonourable in all their actions". The brokers are called "un-trusty" and their "inborn cunning" incredible.<sup>35)</sup> The English complaints are endless and continue from the earliest impressions in the 1620s to the end of the century. Unfortunately we have little or no information on how the Banias regarded the European practices which, on some of their own accounting, were sharp to say, the least. The fact of the matter seems to be that while a few brokers and merchants were a constant source of trouble for European trade, as a general rule the European trading houses depended, to a very great extent, on the probity and

reliability of the Bania. The Bania, on his part, had cause to worry about the intrusion of European commerce in some respects. For one, the European companies began to take over large parts of the Bania trade with West and Southeast Asia and in 1619 they organized a boycott of European business to protest against its take-over of the Red Sea trade. They also protested against the English and Dutch selling coral in Surat and elsewhere and, in the early period at least, they grumbled about the Europeans buying so much for the Asian trade that their own markets were adversely affected. From time to time the Mughal authorities in Broach and Baroda had to issue orders prohibiting the English buying cloth in those places so as to ensure an adequate domestic supply and availability of exportable surplus for Indian traders.<sup>36)</sup> On other occasions the Banias had to demand a sizeable advance (Rs. 20,000 or more) to ensure that the European orders were not arbitrarily cancelled.<sup>37)</sup>

The Banias maintained an uneasy relationship with the Mughal authorities in Surat from time to time. At times they were tyrannized by the Governor and his men, whipped not infrequently and ordered to pay large sums of money on occasions. In 1657 when prince Murad was involved in a war of succession he collected Rs. 500,000 from Surat merchants to help finance his campaign. Some times they were forced to sell certain commodities like silver to the Governor at his prices.<sup>38)</sup>

In their everyday dealings with the Europeans the Banias were pleasant-spoken ("brokers here will not speak but what shall please"). In most of their dealings the word of mouth was scrupulously honoured. In their business dealings they maintained *Roznamahas* or daily journals and books called *nana mel danio* or daily cash registers, *avaro* or account books, and *khata*s or ledgers, and their agreements with the European merchants were written both in the Persian and Gujarati languages. In disputes referred to adjudication by established official agencies an English report of July 28, 1636 says: "The trouble with the brokers seems to have cost both sides dear; but in all business of public difference the custom of this country is such that what the lawyers in Europe take for wrangling the judge here takes as his due or for connivency". Some of the proverbs in common use shed interesting light on life as for instance the Gujarati proverb in use *Pilla latte and picha bolte*—use the stick first and then talk.<sup>39)</sup>

We have already referred to the kind of organization the Banias had developed to protect their own business and other interests. Their own caste organization looked after the observance of appropriate caste rules and punishment of infringements. The *Mahajan* worked for their corporate business interests. It was capable of organizing boycotts and passive resistance against official extortions, mass migrations to protect against official tyranny over craftsmen and traders or religious persecution. That such an organization could have some degree of political influence and participation in Mughal India can be readily accepted.<sup>40)</sup> But the evidence at our disposal, in the absence of local Gujarati records of the time, is not



sufficient to warrant our determining precisely the nature and extent of such matters involving contract, investments, trading facilities; and in matters concerning the interests of the Banias and the local Mughal authorities, who were themselves engaged in commercial ventures of a personal nature, the political influence of the Banias and their Mahajan could be very effective and warrant our use of the term "participation" in the decision-making process. On the other hand the Mughal authorities at the local level were not always a homogenous, much less united, body. At times the interests of the Governor and the *Qazi* could be in conflict. One such instance is already referred to above where the *Qazi*, acting under the religious zeal of the emperor Aurangzeb, took actions which resulted in religious persecution forcing the Surat Banias to carry out a mass exodus from the city. At this time the Governor, who understood the Bania's economic role much better than the *Qazi*, allowed them to move away from the city in spite of the latter's remonstrances. Again the interests of the *Kotwal*, the *Shah Bunder*, the Governor and the *Qazi* were not always the same. This interplay of varied and sometimes conflicting interests in the official group gave the Banias an undoubted leverage. But it was always a game without any fixed or settled rules. The Banias did have an economic clout which they could use effectively from time to time. But they had no assurance of constant political support. The Mughal government, as were also the non-Mughal administrations at different levels and in various regions, was a government of persons rather than fixed and unvarying laws enforced impartially among all subjects. This factor tended to restrict political participation in the decision-making process and due caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions in such matters. The most that can be said is that the *Mahajan* organization was important but its effectiveness was controlled from time to time by factors far beyond its powers. It could forge sanctions such as shutdown of business or mass migration but they could be used only occasionally and in extreme circumstances.

Finally some questions concerning the nature and extent of capital accumulation in the hands of the merchants in seventeenth-century India need to be answered. A fair estimate of the total amount of mercantile capital is not difficult to make on the basis of the evidence we have. Men like Vora, Shantidas, Mohandas Parekh and the Vaishyas were millionaires by any reckoning. On a lower rung stood a number of merchants and brokers who were able to give loans in thousands of rupees. The volume of trade carried on by these men must have amounted to several million rupees from one decade to another. Of them, Vora was reputed to be the richest man of Asia, if not of the world. If an estimate of a total of some 150 merchants of substantial wealth in the different urban mercantile centres in Mughal India be termed reasonable then it may be assumed that the total capital accumulation in cash must be estimated in terms of a billion rupees.

At this point two other facts strike us as rather peculiar. One is that in spite of such enormous wealth most of these Banias were described as living in simple or plain conditions. No European traveller of the seventeenth century describes Su-



rat as an elegant city. Its private wealth was deliberately concealed and hoarded in the form of precious metals and stones and lost to investment because of the fear of the cupidity and expropriatory predilections of certain segments of the Mughal bureaucracy. The English and Dutch descriptions of Shivaji's raid on Surat in January 1664 reveal the extent of such hoards.<sup>41)</sup> Indians traditionally have been inordinately fond of possessing gold and silver but that desire acquired a new edge now as a means of preserving wealth against times of crises and revolutions.

Many of these wealthy merchants contributed varying parts of their wealth for religious endowments. Mohandas Parekh was well known for his charity not only to Hindus but also to Christians. That, reportedly, was the reason given by Shivaji for sparing his house during the 1664 raid. The Jain inscriptions of the time and the references to Jain activity in building shrines in Surat and elsewhere at this time indicate patronage of rich Jain merchants to endowments of their faith. Such endowments as the temple built by Shantidas of Ahmadabad meant expenditure of considerable amounts of money by the merchants.<sup>42)</sup>

Even making allowances for such items of expenditure which could have contributed to circulation of money within the larger society the conclusion seems reasonable that the mercantile capital accumulation resulted in a kind of an economic *cul-de-sac*. There is scarcely any evidence of any significant part of this capital being directly used for industrial investment or technological innovation. This would have been rather difficult especially in view of the segmental divisions created and perpetuated by the caste system. The Bania was a *vaishya* and the ordained occupations for him were commerce and money-lending. Though there always have been deviations from the norms set by the theoretical disquisitions in the scriptural and legal texts, such deviations were, more or less, restricted to movements of a horizontal, rather than vertical, nature. The brokers exploited the weavers from time to time and depended upon them to create surpluses in which trade could be carried on. But the broker's riches seldom rubbed off on the artisan's clothing.

Structured as it was, Indian society in the seventeenth century was unable to work out viable patterns for a two-fold relationship. One concerned the merchant and artisan classes. Only a close collaboration between these two could have ensured the investment of the necessary capital inducing technological innovation on the part of the artisans by which the artisans could have shared in the prosperity brought about by trade and commerce. The technology remained stagnant, putting limits on the productive capacity of the artisan, and imprisoning him in a framework of unremitting labour earning more or less a fixed income. The poverty of the artisans and their exploitation have been noticed time and again by European travellers. We have little evidence to conclude that the lot of the artisan improved to any significant extent through the century.

On the other side there was a failure in establishing firm and assured working relationships between the merchants and those who controlled political and military power in the land. The merchants needed a system of laws under which their

persons and property were assured at all times and were given a reasonable freedom to operate their trade without fear of crippling taxation or outright expropriation. The Indian merchant of the seventeenth century seldom secured such conditions. The number of taxes, duties, cesses and levies charged at various levels during the course of the Mughal administration during the seventeenth century runs into some 70. Almost every ruler, at succession, ordered many of them abolished and Aurangzeb issued a long list of such illegal exactions.<sup>43)</sup> In spite of such pious imperial intentions, it is needless to add, such exactions continued. Princes fighting wars of succession were wont to force merchants to make heavy contributions to their efforts as was done by Murad and indicated above. A week during January 1664 could see the disappearance of substantial quantities of cash and hoarded wealth at the hands of Shivaji. And in between there was nothing to prevent the local Mughal authorities in indulging in extortionate collections from the Bania.

Under such conditions, then, the rise and development of merchant capital in the seventeenth century became more or less an episode in the economic history of India and not the harbingers of an on-going process of economic change and structural modifications within Indian society.<sup>44)</sup> The seventeenth century saw the dissipation of Mughal feudalism into a host of regional feudal societies engaged in incessant wars. These wars, in a sense, were simply continuations, in another form, of the wars of the Mughal period for the much-heralded *Pax Mughalica* was interminably punctuated by wars and innumerable rebellions. The Bania, therefore, cast only a fleeting shadow across the landscape to return once again as a middleman under British rule.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Merchant Prince Virji Vora*

If there is one figure that dominates the commercial and urban history of Surat in the seventeenth century it is that of Virji Vora. His commercial activities were as ubiquitous as was his power overarching. The list of commodities he traded in is endless and the amounts of money he handled run into millions of rupees. His agents roamed through all the major trading areas of India, from Calicut to Agra and Surat to Bihar. His commercial interests also extended from Malaya and Sumatra in the south to Gombroon and Mokha in the north. The English records are replete with references to him reflecting the varying attitudes of frustration, anger, and admiration for the man without whose assistance and co-operation the English could scarcely have found it easy to function in Surat.

For a man of such vast commercial power and far-flung interests little has been written about his career and activities beyond general descriptions. He has been variously described as a Hindu merchant prince and a Muslim (Bohra?).<sup>1)</sup> In 1968 Professor K. H. Kamdar wrote a brief paper on him in Gujarati based on materials from the Bombay Archives and Jain documents in Surat and Baroda.<sup>2)</sup> Mr. Kamdar for the first time pointed out that Vora was a Sthanakavasi Jain of the Lonkagacchhiya group and may have been a member of the Srimali Oswal Porwal caste grouping. Besides his commercial activities Vora was deeply involved in religious affairs and was a lay leader (*Samghapati Sanghavi*) of his community. No one could be admitted to ordination in its monastic organization unless the *Samghapati* was satisfied that the applicant possessed adequate knowledge of the Jain lore. This would indicate that Vora himself possessed a proficiency in Jain learning.

Of his role in seventeenth-century Indian commerce one has to piece together a mosaic from scattered pieces of information on him from the English and Dutch accounts of the times. An attempt is made here to present such information and assess Vora's role in the economic history of the period.

Probably the earliest reference to Vora is contained in an English communication from Surat dated March 22, 1619 recommending one Hacka Parrache (Hak Parekh?), "being servant to Virjee Vora (Virji Vora) merchant of this cittie" to "courteous useage" of English ships at Swally harbour of Surat.<sup>3)</sup> This was in the nature of a permit or a pass to authorize Indian merchants or their agents to visit English ships for purposes of commercial transactions. The fact that Vora was given this facility by the English Surat Factory in 1619 would indicate that he was already a well-established merchant of Surat and could have been around 25 years of age at that time. On the basis of this assumption we may place his birth around 1594-1595, probably in or around Surat. It may also be possible that Vora belonged to a family of well-established merchants as the Jain community to which he

belonged had a long tradition of trade and commerce. In 1619 Vora already had his agents operating in Burhanpur and Agra and possibly in Ahmadabad, Baroda, Broach, Navsari and Gandevi, the prominent indigo and textile production centres at that time. On August 25, 1619 the English at Surat forwarded letters of credit from Vora to his agent "Callian Shaggar (Kalyan Shagird)", (Kalyan Shankar?) in Burhanpur. On February 3, 1621 we find Vora trying to make arrangements with the English for the transporation of his goods worth 30,000 mahmudis or £1500 (one mahmudi=11d. or 12d.) lying in Mandu in Central India on the well-known trade route connecting Agra with Surat. By October 1623 Vora had already become influential with Ishaq Beg, the Mughal Governor of Surat, and Thomas Rastell, President of the English Factory there.<sup>4)</sup> By this time the English had begun to employ a number of Bania brokers such as Tapidas, Chota, Jadu, Somji Chitta and others.

Vora, it must be emphasized here, was not a broker for the English in the accepted sense of the term as Mohandas Parekh was for the Dutch. He was a leading merchant and banker in his own right, able to deal freely with the English, Dutch and later the French as well as other Indian merchants on his own terms. He acted as a banker but was no mere *shroff* and, as will be shown below, the English heavily depended on Vora to bale them out from any financial crisis. Hence it will not be correct to treat Vora and Shantidas Jain as ordinary "Banians" who flocked round the European commercial establishments in the hope of collecting occasional brokerage fees and *dasturi* or *vatav* (middleman's commission for exchange of currencies). Vora's prosperity did not entirely depend on European patronage though he undoubtedly made a fortune out of his dealings with them. In many instances he was more their peer and a serious competitor.

The English had considerable difficulties in dealing with the customs and port authorities as well as the Mughal governors of Surat. Ishaq Beg was the Port Authority (*Shah Bunder*) at Surat in 1616 and was later appointed as its governor in 1619. He was briefly replaced in that post by Jamshed Beg but was back again in Surat in 1621. In 1623-24 matters between the English and the Mughal governor assumed serious proportions and the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627) ordered restrictions to be placed on English persons, activities and properties, throughout his dominions in retaliation for English strong-arm methods in seizing Indian ships and their cargo for redressing wrongs done to them in Surat and elsewhere.<sup>5)</sup> Peace was secured by an agreement between the English Factory and the Surat authorities on September 7, 1624. Among the signatories to this agreement was Virji Vora who acted as the *Mahajan* (leader) of the Hindu-Jain merchants of Surat. As has been mentioned in an earlier chapter the merchants of Surat had organized themselves into such institutions which could act in concert in the interests of the business communities in settling internal trade disputes as also a kind of 'lobby' or 'pressure group' that could call a boycott and suspension of general business or even

mass migration to other areas in protest against governmental economic, social or religious oppression. Virji Vora may be assumed to be the leader of this Mahajan organization and perhaps the *Nagarseth* (leading merchant) of the city.

By 1625 Vora had emerged as an unchallenged commercial leader in Surat. On July 10, 1625 the English report that Vora, "the prime merchant of this towne" had cornered all the pepper brought in by the Deccan merchants and had forbidden them to sell it to anyone else. The English tried to negotiate with Vora to buy 10,000 mahmudis worth of pepper at 16 mahmudis the *maund* (33 lbs.) but Vora demanded a fraction higher in price and also required that the English sell him 25 chests of the best coral they had brought out of Europe. About coral more below. The English attempted to circumvent Vora's monopoly over pepper in Surat by sending their own broker to the Deccan to buy whatever pepper he could. But the English broker reported failure from the Deccan as Vora had outbid the English in the Deccan. Finally the English had to deal with Vora as they were afraid that their Dutch competitors would close them out. In this incident, as in many others, Vora unmistakably displayed his remarkable control over markets in certain commodities in Surat and the Deccan and his skill in playing the Dutch off against the English.<sup>6)</sup>

Among the commodities on which Vora's commercial empire was based spices were certainly very important. He seems to have bought large quantities of pepper, cloves, nutmeg and mace and dictated their prices not only in Surat but also elsewhere. The volume of his dealings is indicated by stray figures. In April 1629 he sold the English 20,000 mahmudis worth of pepper. In 1642 he had contracted to provide them with substantial quantities of pepper but found himself in difficulties though finally he agreed to deliver it in Calicut. In 1648 the English complained that Vora and some other merchants in Surat annually engrossed all the supplies of cloves and raised prices to Rs. 62 and Rs. 65 (one rupee= 2s. 0d. to 2s. 6d.) per maund. In 1649 Vora bought up all the available quantities of mace and nutmeg. Such dealings gave Vora a virtual monopolistic control over the markets in spices from Calicut in the south to Agra in the north.<sup>7)</sup>

Vora also dealt in bullion. In 1633 he offered to buy 12,000 *tolas* (1 ounce = 2½ *tolas*) brought in by the English fleet that year at the rate of 21½ mahmudis a piece for the Dutch riders and 20 mahmudis a piece for the 20 shilling piece. The money was to be paid in a month and either in mahmudis or rupees. In 1650, when the *shroffs* of Surat refused to take the English silver ingots Vora bought them at the rates prevalent in the previous year. He also bought quantities of ivory, English and Dutch textiles, quicksilver, vermillion and copper. In 1668 he and Haji Zahid Beg, a leading Muslim merchant of Surat, had cornered thousands of *maunds* of quicksilver and vermillion, enough to supply the whole country for many years. Quicksilver was used widely in the process of refining gold and in its conversion to vermillion was used in great quantities in Hindu-Jain households and religious establishments for ritual purposes.<sup>8)</sup> In 1669 he proposed a contract with



the English that they sell all the copper their ships would bring in the future but this deal fell through as the English insisted that he buy tin as well and much better and cheaper tin was available to him from Malaya.<sup>9)</sup>

Coral was in great demand in India at this time as has been shown elsewhere in this work. It was imported by the English and the Dutch from the Mediterranean and also from the Red Sea and Persian Gulf areas. An English letter of October 28, 1613 states that Indians "buy as much of it as they can, and hoard it up as it were gold and the more they have of it the greater honour it is for them. . .". Initially the merchants of Surat were vehemently opposed to European trade in coral and in 1619 they demanded complete prohibition of European trade in West Asiatic coral by the Mughal government. This resistance continued until 1621.

Vora was the most important customer for the coral brought in by the English and the Dutch. In 1628 when the English found it difficult to dispose of their coral Vora took it off their hands at 36% discount off the customs valuation which itself was 100% above the invoiced cost. In 1633 they also sold to Vora amber beads and 92 chests of coral. In 1642 they complained that as regards coral Virji Vora "who is in great favour with the present Governor of Surat and consequently aweing all other Banian merchants to do his observance, is treating for its purchase, but in so dilatory a fashion. . .". In 1644 the English reported that Vora bought up the coral brought by the 1642 English fleet. Such was his control on the market in coral that in a letter of 1644 the English complained that they could not sell their coral at Surat as Virji Vora, "our almost only merchant" had a large stock on hand and was unwilling to take more unless at very low prices. The situation repeated itself in 1646 when it was reported that "the coral brought to Surat by the *Eagle* was offered to Virji Vora, our constant quondam merchant but he refused it on the ground that he had large quantities in stock pretending also (as it is very true) that Deccan and those adjacent countries are abundantly supplied from Goa and that other merchants of this place have received some quantity of coral from Mocha, but chiefly, we believe, because he cannot (as formerly) engross all into his own hands". In 1651 he bought coral from the Dutch and a year later he had plenty of it on hand.<sup>10)</sup>

Vora maintained his own agents in a number of important commercial towns in India. Agra, the imperial capital and centre of the indigo area had his agents working there for decades. The English in Surat often used Vora's facilities for transmitting large amounts of money from Surat to Agra through *hundis* (demand drafts). Vora, on his part, influenced the activities of English brokers there through his agents for his own benefit.<sup>11)</sup> Likewise he had his agents in Burhanpur, the major transportation and textile centre on the route between Agra and Surat.<sup>12)</sup> In the Deccan and Goa his agents bought spices, especially pepper and cardamom and from Goa he used the Malabar frigates for his coastal trade. In Calicut, the area for trade in assorted spices, Vora had a special interest. An English report of



July 18, 1643 says: "I understand that Virji Vora yearly sends down his people hither to Calicut with cotton and opium by which he doth (gain?) less than double his money to those people he buyeth his pepper off (and) afterwards disposeth of his pepper to us for double what it costs him. . ." The English may buy directly, continues the report, and adds, "but indeed Virji Vora, by reason of his continued mighty ingagements (debts), must not be displeased in any case. I confess him to be a man that hath often supplied our wants in Surat in moneys, for his own ends. Notwithstanding, I hold him to have been the most injurious man to your trade in all the Mogull's dominions, for what ordinary Banian merchant dare come to English house to look upon coral or any other commodity; he by his potency and intimacy with the governor forgeth somewhat or other against the poor man, utterly to ruin him; so that no merchant in the town dare displease him by coming to our house to look upon any commodity, except some or other sometimes whom he sends purposely to bid for a commodity (that he is about) little or nothing, only to make us weary of our commodities. He knoweth that we (in regard to our extreme ingagement) must sell, and so he beats us down till we come to his own rates; and thus hath been his proceedings this many years. And I conclude that so long as Virji Vora is so much our creditor, little or no profit (is) to be made upon any goods we can bring to Surat".<sup>13)</sup> The English sound plaintive, somewhat righteous, but it must not be forgotten that both they and Vora were in the field each for his own profit and gain. That Vora could beat the English traders at their own game, in spite of their international corporate resources and facilities, created exasperation and fruitless anger which were expressed from time to time in numerous communications from Agra, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Broach, Baroda, Surat and London.

Outside of India, Vora's trading interests extended to Mokha and Gombroon in the Persian Gulf-Red Sea area and to Malaya and Sumatra in Southeast Asia.<sup>14)</sup> Often the English had to accommodate him in transporting his goods at the cost of displacing a part of the regular English cargo and at times even to carry his goods free of freight charges. This happened in both areas. Vora also used English agencies in these parts for transmission of money between Surat and the two distant trading zones.<sup>15)</sup>

The major source of Vora's strength and power, however, lay in his remarkable ability to marshal large amounts of cash at various points simultaneously. As mentioned above his Agra agent was often used by the English in Surat as a banking facility. He exacted heavy *batta* (discount or difference in exchange rates between various currencies which varied between 4 mahmudis to 13 or 14 mahmudis per 100 rupees and 9% to 10% between Surat and Masulipatam) for sending mahmudis, pagodas (one pagoda = between 7s. 6d. and 9s. 4½d.), and other assorted currencies in rupees. His letters of credit to the English helped them several times in their financial difficulties of crisis proportions. The English debts to him in 1628 were reported to be Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 6,000,000 in 1669.<sup>16)</sup> He charged, as the

English complained, high rates of interest ranging between 1 per cent and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per month, but they had to pay them for "the town is very empty of moneys; Virji Vora is the only master of it" and "none but Virji Vora had money to lend or will lend".<sup>17)</sup> Indeed, on quite a few occasions, it was Vora alone on whom the English could depend for financial survival. Thus, on January 27, 1642, Swally wrote to London: "In these necessitous and calamitous times, your greatest creditor Virji Vora, whose indeed requiry of his monies brought first your credit in question in Surat. . . undertook our relief" by offering a loan of Rs. 100,000 payable in Ahmadabad which enabled provision of a lading for the *London*. Similarly in 1650 Vora offered Merry, President at Surat, Rs. 100,000 whenever needed and in 1647 the English investment in Persia was kept alive only with monies borrowed from Vora.<sup>18)</sup>

But the most noteworthy of Vora's contribution to English commercial investments in India was his financing the Company's voyage to Pegu in Burma in 1647. For this he had advanced 10,000 old pagodas (about £6,000) at Golconda at  $1\frac{1}{6}$  per cent per month. In 1650 the English requested Vora to transfer the debt to Surat at the rate of Rs. 455=100 old pagodas and some differences arose over payment of interest over exchange rates. The debt seems to have been finally settled in 1650.<sup>19)</sup>

Vora took full advantage of his financial power not only by securing striking returns on his investments but also in numerous other ways. His dominance over the coral trade in Surat has already been noted above. The English continued to complain, as in 1646, that Vora to whom "vast sums" are due "doeth us even to what himself pleaseth, much to your dishonour and prejudice, especially in the sale of your coral". The Surat Factory writing to its agents in Persia in 1631 expressed disapproval of marking some bales belonging to Vora with English letters though it was done without prejudice to the Company's freight as such a practice could lead the Surat Government to suspect the English of smuggling Indian-owned goods under English cover. He also lent money to individual Englishmen to finance their own private trade, a practice so often denounced by London as it affected the Company's corporate profits a great deal. Such loans, it is needless to add, went a long way in establishing close personal relations between prominent English Factors and Vora and his agents.<sup>20)</sup> An event in 1652 sheds interesting light both on relations between Vora and the English and the role of *Mahajan* organization in economic life of the city. There was a long-pending dispute between Vora and the Surat Factory concerning certain outstanding accounts which Vora had failed to clear. Vora had insisted that the Factory make some allowances and rebates to which the Surat establishment objected. The dispute continued through all of 1652 and spilled over into the next two years and at one stage the English suggested that the dispute be referred for arbitration to the corporate authority of Surat merchants. This was obviously the Surat *Mahajan* which, on this showing, was capable of dealing effectively as an arbitrator between one of its most influential members

and foreign traders.<sup>21)</sup> In 1662 when two brokers working for the Surat Factory, Somji Chitta and Chota Thakur, were dismissed for alleged dishonest acts, they turned to Vora for redress. Vora did his best in forcing economic sanctions against the English by trying to deter Surat merchants from buying copper brought in by English ships and also hindered the sale of their coral. But the English were powerless against him for, as far back as 1634, they had learned that the "potency of Virji Vora (who hath been the usual merchant and now become the sole monopolist of all European commodities) is observed to bear such sway amongst the inferior merchants of this town that when they would often-times buy (and give greater prices) they are still restrained, not daring to betray their interests to his knowledge and their own sufferance, in so much that the time and price is still in his will and at his own disposal". In 1636 the Surat Factory wrote to London: "Here in Surat all merchants, as well town dwellers as those that come from abroad, are so over-awed by the over-grown greatness of Virji Vora that if it be a commodity which is accustomed or does intend to buy no man dares look upon it, for the broker (even our own, which have sole dependance upon your business) dare not accompany such merchant into our house".<sup>22)</sup> In spite of all such frustrations the English endeavoured to maintain amicable relations with him practically until the end of his career. In the event the English captured an Indian junk which had Vora's cargo on it; the English quietly restored his goods and gave their own safe-conduct passes to ships sailing out of Surat harbour only when such action was recommended by Vora.<sup>23)</sup> In 1660, London sent Vora a present in appreciation of his aid to its Factors in India. There is an interesting letter from Vora to the Company in London dated January 25, 1655 concerning a refund or rebate due to him. This letter is in English but is signed in Gujarati as "Virji Vohora Kendua" and is in the India Office Records.<sup>24)</sup>

Vora also had fairly extensive dealings with the Dutch in Surat and elsewhere, and later the French. In April 1648 he bought large quantities of cloves from the Dutch at Rs. 45 per maund and sold them at Rs. 62 to Rs. 65 per maund, making a profit of Rs. 27 per maund as a result of his almost monopolistic control over the market in spices. A year later, in 1649, he is reported pressing the Dutch to fulfil their contract for supplying him with spices which they brought from Java and the other islands. He had wanted to buy the whole quantity worth £10,000. The English had difficulty in collecting mace and nutmeg for their own lading and Vora was willing to sell them mace at Rs. 89 per *maund* and nutmeg at Rs. 28½, prices which the English found too high. In 1650 Vora, in alliance with the Dutch broker Mohandas Parekh, bought up all the goods brought by the Dutch to Surat. This practice seems to have continued in later years for we find that in 1665 Haji Zahid Beg, the leading Muslim merchant of Surat, succeeded in buying a rich Dutch cargo from Batavia "baulking their former merchant Virji Vora" who was usually their customer; and this was occasioned "by the said Haji Zahid Beg acquainting the General of Batavia of the abuse put on him the last year, who, notwithstanding he proffered more than Virji Vora, was not suffered to have the bargain, the Dutch

commander and Virji Vora better understanding one another". Soon upon their arrival the French also found it expedient to deal with Vora though in 1669-1670 we find him trying to stop two French ships from sailing because the French had not settled their debts to him.<sup>25)</sup>

Vora generally maintained amicable relations with the Mughal administration in Surat. Often his commercial interests were complimentary to those of governors such as Mirza Arab and Muiz-ul-Mulk.

They needed Vora's assistance and most of the time worked on favourable terms with him with the result that Vora secured special concessions from them as is reflected in the frequent English complaints against Vora's overweening postures because of his friendly relations with the local Mughal government. But Vora had his own share of troubles with governors such as Masih-us-Zaman who also came into conflict with the English. A long letter from President Fremien at Swally to London on January 4, 1639 states: "Amongst other things you will find frequent complaints of our Governor's most impetuous proceedings against all sorts of people subsisting under his command, and how far his rapine had been extended against Virji Vora and almost all that had anything to lose; in which number our brokers and *mody* (steward) most unjustly suffered because they were our servants . . ." The letter goes on to say that Masih-us-Zaman was replaced by Muiz-ul-Mulk and Virji Vora "sent for to court to answer in person". Vora, according to the letter seems to have been imprisoned for a brief period by Masih-us-Zaman which indicates the treatment given by some members of the corrupt Mughal nobility to businessmen even great ones such as Vora.<sup>26)</sup> With the return of Muiz-ul-Mulk Vora's troubles seemed to have been over and by 1642 he was once again in a position to awe "all other Banian merchants to his observance". But his troubles at the court erupted again in 1643 though their precise nature is not quite clear.<sup>27)</sup>

The greatest crisis of Vora's career, however, came in early January 1664 when Shivaji, the leader of the Marathas attacked Surat. His home, along with those of other rich merchants, was plundered on January 7 and, as narrated in an earlier chapter, Shivaji's men carried away an enormous booty comprising gold, pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds and a large amount of cash. Estimates of Vora's loss during this raid vary and undoubtedly he lost a large part of his accumulated treasure. But Vora was by no means completely ruined for an English letter of November 27, 1664, some ten months after the raid, says that "Haji Zahid Beg and Virji Vora, the two greatest merchants of this town, hold up their heads still and are for great bargains; so that it seems Shivaji hath not carried away all, but left them a competency to carry on their trade."<sup>28)</sup> This is not difficult to understand because Vora's liquid assets were not all in Surat but were distributed through a number of centres such as Broach, Baroda, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur and Agra which were untouched by Maratha raids. Secondly, Vora and most other Hindu-Jain merchants in the Mughal empire had learnt the art of survival against the expropriatory rapacity of Mughal officials and the vicissitudes of dynastic fortunes by hoard-

ing and secreting a significant part of their total assets in gold, silver and precious stones which was in the nature of an insurance though all such wealth was lost to circulation, reinvestment and further returns.

But Vora's career was past its prime after 1664 when he could have been close to 70 years of age. His waning strength is reflected in an English report of March, 12, 1665: "Your old customer, Virji Vora, hath now left you, or rather we him, having found another way to supply your occasions more reasonable, though we believe he would now abate you something to have your custom again, for he loses not only the loan of his money, but the carrying away of many a good parcel of goods out of your warehouse, when he found he had got an advantage of you".<sup>29)</sup> But Vora was not finished yet. In 1669 the English still owed him substantial debts and in 1670 he had enough influence to try to stop the lading of French ships because of their outstanding debts to him. Possibly the last reference to him is from 1670 when Khawaja Minaz took delivery of some broadcloth on his behalf and Nanchand, his grandson, bought some tin and copper. Since his grandson had already begun to operate the family business in 1670, it is possible that Vora may have retired by then from his activities and possibly departed from the scene in 1675 when he could have been 80 years old.<sup>30)</sup>

Thus ended a remarkable career of a commercial tycoon whose activities spanned more than half a century of commercial manipulation and financial skill. His career and achievements display all the strengths and weaknesses of the process of capital accumulation in seventeenth-century India. His total assets must have totalled over 50 million rupees at a conservative estimate. There is no doubt that he benefited greatly by his association with European trade in India though it would be an oversimplification to characterize him simply as a product of the revolution ushered in by the European mercantile impact that had begun to be felt in the area. It was his strategic position that enabled him to deal with the European houses on more than equal terms.

That men like Vora were able to accumulate capital on such a large scale in spite of adverse conditions was no mean achievement. Their profits were those of middlemen but they were vital links between the primary producers and artisans, and separated regions and overseas markets. They displayed the strengths and weaknesses of the process of capital accumulation peculiar to Mughal India.<sup>31)</sup> Some of them such as Bhimji Parekh even thought of innovations like the use of the printing press in 1676-1677 when he tried to spread the knowledge of printing and its use for Hindu scriptures with the help of an English printer. This, however, proved frustrating when the Englishman refused to impart his skill to Indians, as stated earlier. They made their own contributions to religious establishments and literatures of their own persuasions and played leading roles in religious, economic and social affairs of their society.<sup>32)</sup> But the transformation of their mercantile capital into industrial and finance capital was beyond their capacity and was largely influenced by the limits set by their own social organization and the state under



which they lived and functioned. There was a general failure in evolving an alliance between feudalism and the nascent mercantile capitalism and under such conditions men like Vora could be little more than episodes in the economic history of India rather than harbingers of significant change leading to the emergence of a modern age.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The European Traders*

More than any other Indian city Surat proved to be the gateway to European domination in India. Its strategic location on the west coast, the presence within its gates of a numerous and experienced Indian mercantile class with trade relations not only in the sub-continental interior but also in West and Southeast Asia and its extensive market-places in commodities much in demand overseas, made Surat an attractive starting point for the pioneers of European commerce.

The first Europeans to confront Surat were the Portuguese. After Vasco Da Gama's historic voyage round the Cape of Good Hope to Calicut on May 20, 1498, the Portuguese, with their irresistible naval might, rapidly occupied strategic locations in the Indian Ocean area. They occupied Goa in the kingdom of Bijapur in 1510 and a year later in 1511 they captured Malacca controlling the maritime traffic in the Straits of Malacca. In 1515 they took Ormuz in the Persian Gulf and between 1518 and 1586 they succeeded in maintaining their commanding position in Ceylon. They acquired Bassein, near Bombay, in 1534 and a year later in 1535 they had fortified Diu, commanding the entrance to the Gulf of Cambay. Finally in 1559 they entrenched themselves in Daman south of Surat on the coast. With these key points in their hands the Portuguese were able to maintain an oceanic empire in the Indian Ocean sweeping off the Arabs from the Arabian Sea lanes and imposing their own passport system (*cartez*) on Indian shippers for safe conduct on the high seas. The Sultans of Gujarat were in no position effectively to challenge the Portuguese control of the seas and their only response to the Portuguese sack of Surat and Rander in 1529-1530 was to build a fortress to protect the city of Surat.

The advent of the Dutch and the English, however, spelt the end of the "Portuguese century in Asia". The English Captain Thomas Best inflicted on their armada a sanguinary defeat off Surat in 1612 and in 1640 the Dutch had wrested Malacca from them. In the opening decades of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese power was on the decline though their depredations against coastal towns north and south of Surat continued during the first half of the century.<sup>1)</sup>

The Portuguese, according to an apocryphal story, had ostensibly come to India to find "spices and Christians", perhaps in that order of importance. From their strongholds in Goa, Bassein and Daman they did carry on a lucrative trade in Indian commodities and, as mentioned earlier in this work, a number of Portuguese merchants either resided in or visited periodically the city of Cambay to buy goods. A recent study points out that the annual capital involved in the Goa-Gujarat trade was over Rs. 4,000,000 (or \$459,242 today), most of it with Cambay, during the sixteenth century and at the end of the century the Gujarati sea trade was worth about Rs. 30,000,000 (\$3,444,316) a year. This large trade involved the co-operation of Saraswat Brahmans in Goa and Gujarati Banias in Goa and Daman,

the number of the latter being estimated at 30,000 in Goa, Bassein, Diu and Daman with some 100 Portuguese merchants being resident in the city of Cambay. During the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir the Portuguese traders ranged inland up to Agra and as an English letter of November 1616 states they laded three or four ships with country commodities "whereof the meanest is of 1600 tons, each of them carrying as much as four" English ships. This trade continued through the better part of the century. During the latter part of the seventeenth century Rustamji Manekji (1635-1721), the wealthy Parsi broker of Surat and Bombay, acted in their behalf and among his numerous duties were to arrange for Portuguese commercial transactions in Surat, to provide commercial and other intelligence to the Portuguese in Goa, administer the issuance of passports in Surat and act as their attorney in political and commercial matters with the Mughal government in Surat. However, in comparison with the range and volume of English and Dutch trade in Surat that of the Portuguese was much less than significant.<sup>2)</sup>

The first Englishman to have first-hand knowledge of India was the Jesuit Thomas Stevens who arrived in Goa in October 1579 and lived there until his death in 1619. From Goa he wrote to people in England about commercial possibilities in India. After the foundation of the Levant Company, Leedes, Newberry, Story and Fitch were sent to India by the overland route and after many an adventure en route Newberry and Fitch travelled to Agra in 1585 and Fitch finally returned to London in 1591. Newberry had carried with him a letter from the English Queen Elizabeth I to the Mughal Emperor Akbar requesting trading facilities for her subjects. John Mildenhall, a London merchant, travelled overland to Agra in 1603 to secure a Mughal *firman* but was frustrated by the Jesuit machinations in behalf of the Portuguese. After the formation of the English East India Company in 1600 its ships were sent out at periodic intervals and the first significant contact with Surat was made in 1608 when William Hawkins arrived with the ship *Hector*. Hawkins went to Agra in 1609 and after spending some three years at the court sailed back to England in 1612 receiving no more than general and vague assurances of welcome for English trade in India. In 1612, as mentioned above, Captain Thomas Best inflicted a defeat on a Portuguese fleet off the Surat coast and it was this, more than anything else, that convinced Indians that the English could be a good counterpoise to the Portuguese in terms of much needed naval protection. Thomas Kerridge, a native of Exeter, arrived in Surat with Best's fleet in 1612 and took charge of the English establishment serving there until 1628. Kerridge was assisted by Thomas Rastell and a little later the two were joined by Giles James. During the absence of Kerridge, who had gone to England in 1622-1624, Rastell acted as the chief at Surat. On his return in 1624 Kerridge was paid a salary of £400 a year with the promise of a gratuity of £300 at the end of four years. It was probably in 1618 that the chief at Surat was called the President of the Factory. Then followed a succession of appointments among which we may notice here only those that were responsible for the development of the English

position in Surat. Among these William Methwold was the most prominent. He was sent out from England in March 1633 and arrived in Surat on November 7, 1633.

Before we go into the details of Methwold's career we must refer to the first properly accredited diplomatic contact between England and India. The English King James I had sent a letter to Jahangir with Hawkins and though Hawkins described himself as an ambassador few at the Mughal court took it seriously. The Company had begun to feel that only a properly equipped diplomatic representation to Agra could secure for it an appropriate place in Surat and elsewhere and as a result a young English gentleman, Sir Thomas Roe, educated at Oxford and well thought of and connected in the court circles in London, was selected and sent from London in February-March 1615. Roe arrived at Swally on September 18, 1615 and then journeyed to Agra where he remained until 1618 to secure a treaty of commerce in India. Jahangir wrote polite replies to King James and issued a *firman* to authorities in Surat ordering that the difficulties encountered by the English in obtaining housing and pursuing their trade be removed. It was the best that Roe could do and though his diplomatic achievement was less than what he himself had desired, his *Journal* and letters give us intimate and detailed glimpses of life in the country and at the court in the second decade of the seventeenth century. Roe left Surat on February 17, 1619 and arrived in England in September of the same year. In his letters to the Company, Roe made a number of valuable suggestions on the need for English trade with Persia and the Red Sea, of ways of dealing with the Portuguese and Mughals and on problems and prospects for English commerce in India. He declared Surat to be "the fountain and life of all the East India trade" and advised his countrymen to stand resolute in the face of Portuguese threats and Dutch competition. His advice was well-heeded and in that sense Roe's visit to India was much more successful than the value of the Mughal *firman* issued at his behest.<sup>3)</sup>

At the time Roe was busy at the Mughal court in Agra an eccentric Englishman, Thomas Coryat, called "our English Fakier," came to Surat in 1617. He was born in 1577 and had travelled in Europe before his journey to Asia which was undertaken in a spirit of curiosity. On his way Coryat learned to speak Persian rather fluently and displayed a spirit of argumentation in theological matters. He died in Surat in December 1617 and was perhaps the first English 'tourist' to India.

To return to our account of Methwold. Methwold came of a well-known Norfolk family and was born in 1590. At the age of 16, in 1606 he was apprenticed to a London merchant for whom he worked for the next nine years. In 1615 he became a factor of the East India Company and was described as "being perfect in accounts, and hath the Dutch and French languages". In 1616 he arrived in Surat and then travelled to Bantam and Tiku and was posted to Masulipatam as "Principal of the Coast of Coromandel" in May 1618 where he remained until October 1622. He was relieved of his post in October 1622 on charges of indulging in private

trade. He returned to England in August 1623 where his affairs were settled by April 1624 when he was dismissed from the Company's service. In 1633 he was again sent out by the Company to head its establishment in Surat where he landed on November 7, 1633. He relinquished his charge in Surat to Fremlen on December 27, 1638 and sailed for England on January 5, 1639 reaching England in December of that year. In 1640 he was elected to be one of the Directors of the Company and served in London until his death in 1653.<sup>4)</sup>

Methwold's work in Surat must be viewed in the context of the problems facing the English in 1633 when he arrived to head the establishment. These were, in their order of urgency, finding suitable lodgings, establishing relations with the Mughal authorities in Surat, establishing the trade organization with a staff of good Indian brokers and competing against the Portuguese and the Dutch. The first English house, properly so-called, was secured in May 27, 1616 under an agreement with Khwaja Arab for the lease of a building (old mint house?) for three years at 600 mahmudis per annum. A Surat letter of August 1618 has reference to a dispute about the continued occupation of this house and a *firman* issued by Prince Khurram concerning it. In March 1619 the English experienced difficulties in finding housing and were given three different homes at great distance from each other, neither convenient for lodging nor with sufficient warehousing space. It was not until 1623 that they were able to occupy the building owned by Khwaja Hasan Ali with a garden, stables and other conveniences. It was to this house that Methwold came on his arrival.<sup>5)</sup> A description of the English house in Surat in 1629-1630 just before Methwold's arrival is given by Peter Mundy: "Surat house is of the best sort in town, very fair and strongly built, the roofs in general flat and terraced aloft to walk on, very substantially done with lime etc., so that no rain can pierce it, and below a fair hall, chambers and rooms for the President and Council etc., merchants, with complete warehouses, walks (etc.) below. We have also a garden which for its bigness is the neatest and costliest in all the country hereabouts; being near 4 square, having 4 very fair long walks round about, all covered over with vines supported with timber; very curiously contrived. It hath 4 other allies which go from the middle of the long walks into the middle of the garden, where stands a chowtree (*chabutra*), or pretty room, covered overhead to sit and pass the time. Before it stands a little tank to wash in time of heats and rain, in the midst of which is a spout, which at pleasure is let to run, upon which they add others (as occasion serveth) among the rest, this first six spouts running outwards from the top of the main spout, and one right up, over which is a round plate fastened so that the water, striking with violence against it, causeth it to diffuse and disperse itself so equally, every way, and every part of the water so conjoining with the other that it perfectly resembles the half of a great glass globe or a crystal cupola, the edge whereof is again by the under spoutes cut into so many divisions like the valens of a canopy". The water for this fountain came from a well and was drawn by oxen. It was in this garden that Mandelslo was invited to a grand



party given on the occasion of the transfer of charge from Methwold to his successor Fremlen in 1638. All the English employees were then assembled to listen to an oration followed by a great diversion at which various delicacies were served and much entertainment offered.<sup>6)</sup>

The subsequent history of the English house in Surat may be briefly given here. In 1664 during the month of January the house was threatened by Shivaji's raid on Surat. The Factory stood in the north-western part of the city "in what is known as the Mulla's Ward". In its neighbourhood stood the *sarai* and the mosque of Mirza Zahid Beg and beyond it a building which then may have been the *sarai* used by the Armenian and Turkish merchants. On the other side was the Armenian church. The Factory was later moved close to the river near the Mulla's Water Gate. In 1663-1664 the expenses of the establishments at Surat and Swally are given as Rs. 14,446. In 1674 the Factory house was described as "being ancient and in great danger of falling down"; arrangements were being made to repair it but were stopped for a month as the emperor's officers demanded perquisites and the chief building overseer was ordered to pay Rs. 60 or more. John Fryer describes the house in January 1674/75: "The house the English live in at Surat is partly the King's gift, partly hired; built of stone and excellent timber, with good carving, without representations; very strong, for that each floor is half a yard thick at least, of the best plastered cement, which is very weighty. It is contrived after the Moor's buildings, with upper and lower galleries, or terrace walks; a neat oratory, a convenient open place for meals. The President has spacious lodgings, noble rooms for council and entertainment, pleasant tanks, yards, and an Hammum to wash in; but no gardens in the city, or very few, though without they have many, like wildernesses, overspread with trees. The English had a neat one, but Shivaji's coming, destroyed it; it is known, as the other factories are, by their several flags flying".

We have a description of the English house as it was toward the end of the century in Ovington's description of it: "The house provided for the entertainment of the English at Surat belongs to the Mughal, and is fitted with the best accommodations of any in the city. It is situated in the north-west part of it, and is able to give convenient lodgings to forty persons, besides several decent apartments to the President. Our Landlord Aurangzeb is extreme kind and liberal in permitting us to expend the rent, which is £60 yearly, either in beautifying, repairing, or in additional rooms to the house, so that he seldom receives much rent from us. It is built with the convenience of several cellars, and warehouses, of a tank of water, and an Hammum."<sup>7)</sup>

The English buildings formed a rectangle with a courtyard separating the two wings. The main gateway was on the south of a bend in the river and led to the administrative offices on the ground floor in the western wing. The private quarters of the President and other members were situated on the upper storeys. The eastern block consisted of storerooms and besides these were the rooms for the servants. The whole complex was fortified with a strong wall.<sup>8)</sup> An inventory of

articles at the Surat house dated December 6, 1629 makes interesting reading. It had "silver plate" (spoons, wine cups, a ewer and basin, beer bowls, saltcellars, a rosewater bottle, a betel box, a spittoon etc.) worth 2,639 mahmudis, copper utensils, brassware, chairs, stools, longforms, tables, 26 cots, carpets, table linen, seven horses, oxen, one great coach and five others, tents with their furniture, china and earthenware and a garden valued at Rs. 1000 or 2,250 mahmudis. A similar list is also available for the Ahmadabad factory. The clerks used scretiores or desks, paper secured either from Ahmadabad or England and some 1000 quills a year. In the 1660s the house had its own modest library begun with six volumes of books containing the Old and New Testaments in Hebrew and other languages and a communication of 1666 states: "Your library here is carefully looked after and preserved, and we could wish it were better furnished with books. It consists for the main of English treatises, and is almost totally disfurnished of the works of the ancient writers. We find not, of all the Fathers works, any more than the Epistles of Clemens Romanus, published by Mr. Patrick Young. Here are the Epistles of Ignatius, the works of Epiphanius and St. Augustine, with some few imperfect pieces of other Fathers, but belonging to a private library. Our desire is that you would be pleased to furnish the library with a supply of some of the ancient writers (if you shall think it good) with these" or some other works of a similar genre.<sup>9)</sup>

An essential part of the Factory was the warehouse where the goods brought in from England or other foreign parts as well as commodities meant for export were to be stored awaiting transportation to their destinations. In places where built-up warehouses were not available goods were stored under a thatched roof (*chappar*). These warehouses had a terrace for the top and could be erected for Rs. 400 to Rs. 500. The Company also had a warehouse at Swally which was surrounded by a thick hedge of thorns to prevent thefts. The Surat warehouses were well-guarded and the establishment always had a good supply of firearms and ammunition.<sup>10)</sup>

An interesting incident reported in a Surat communication dated November 18-19, 1616 may be mentioned here. The English had set up a bell (8 lbs. weight) with a small frame in the form of a turret outside the common hall or meeting place. The *Kotwal* and others raised objections to this thinking that "infidels had taken over the town" alleging that it was a cross. In response to these objections the Governor, Ibrahim Khan, ordered the bell taken down.<sup>11)</sup>

The problem of establishing smooth-working relationships with the Mughal authorities was both complex and remained almost insoluble till the end. Much depended on the particular person occupying the office of the Governor of the city and in quite a few cases the English had happy relations with the Governor. But there were times when relations reached a breaking point. Such cases arose when the English were suspected of piratical acts or would not yield to what they thought were illegal exactions. The problem of selecting brokers did not present

too many difficulties though complaints were often made about the dishonesty of the brokers. We have already dealt with the function of the brokers in the chapter on the Indian business community, and will not dilate upon it here further. The problem of relations with the Portuguese and the Dutch was more complicated as it depended upon relations between England and Portugal and Holland as also the nature and intensity of mercantile competition among them from time to time. Portuguese piracy remained a major worry though the English were quite capable of safeguarding their own ships against the Portuguese threats. But from time to time the Mughals expected the English to render assistance to them or the shipping of their subjects against Portuguese threats when matters became very complex. Ever since their first appearance in Indian waters the Portuguese had actively resented the English intrusion in what was looked upon as a Portuguese preserve. During the reign of Jahangir they had enough influence in Agra to frustrate English efforts at evolving favourable relations with the Mughal imperial authorities as was seen in the cases of Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe. The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1630 was expected to bring to an end the state of continuing Portuguese hostility toward English trade in western India but this did not come about. The English at Surat, however, hoped that some satisfactory and amicable relations could be locally established and tried to enlist the help of the Jesuits toward this. In May 1631 Rastell attempted to open negotiations through the good offices of the Jesuits Antonio Pereira and Antonio de Andrade but the reply received was an inquiry whether the English would join with the Portuguese in a mutual offence-defence alliance against the Dutch. Methwold took up this matter on his arrival and in 1633 requested the assistance of Father Alavaco Tavares, Provincial of the Jesuits at Daman, for an agreement between the two parties. As things stood the famine of 1631-32 had worked disastrously for English trade in Surat and elsewhere in northern and western India and they were loath to incur expenses of hostilities. In January 1635 Methwold visited Goa for personal negotiations with the Portuguese authorities and on January 10 an accord was reached establishing friendly and mutually helpful relations between the two nations in India and these relations lasted not only throughout the century but also through later times.<sup>12)</sup>

The problem of relations with the Dutch was not amenable to such quick and easy solutions. These relations were conditioned by the Dutch hostility to English ventures in the East Indies, hostility between England and Holland in Europe and the Anglo-Dutch competition for Indian commodities at Surat and elsewhere in India. The English had neutralized the Portuguese by defeating them off Surat in 1612 and by capturing in 1622 the Portuguese stronghold of Ormuz in the Persian Gulf, which the Portuguese had occupied since 1515. The Portuguese also lost Malacca to the Dutch in 1640-41. The Dutch had made strenuous efforts to drive the English out of the Indonesia area from 1623 onward and the wars between England and Holland in 1652-1654 brought the two nations, therefore, into open hostility in the Indian area so that they remained in uneasy relation-

ships through the seventeenth century in Surat and elsewhere.<sup>13)</sup>

A major problem for the English at Surat stemmed from their own strong-arm tactics in seizing Indian shipping in retaliation against Mughal restrictions on trade at Surat. These were nothing short of piratical acts for whatever the grievances of the English in Surat and elsewhere in the Mughal dominions they were operating in Mughal territories and under Mughal sovereignty and could do so legally only on Mughal terms. There was no question of reciprocity here for no subjects of the Mughals were trading in English territories at this time. The English seizure of Indian ships was contrary to all rules of international behaviour and rules of conduct. The English, like the Dutch and the Portuguese, simply used their superior naval might in browbeating Asian states on the high seas and used "gunboat diplomacy" to bolster their own selfish national designs. Both the Dutch and English Companies were armed with charters which made them quasi-sovereign states with their own navies and armed forces, rights to declare wars and sign peace treaties, occupy and fortify landed possessions overseas and demand and secure rights of extraterritoriality in Indian, Ceylonese, Malayan and Indonesian states. Trade was but an aspect of this early European imperialism and if the flag followed trade in many cases the flag created conditions for favourable trade.

On November 24, 1616 Sir Thomas Roe wrote to the Company: "Let this be received as a rule that if you will profit, seek it at sea, and in quiet trade; for without controversy it is an error to affect garrisons and land wars in India". By and large this advice the English followed until 1665 when they acquired Bombay which they soon began to fortify. But as early as 1617 the English had begun selective reprisals against Indian ships in order to put pressure on the Mughals. This continued in 1619 and 1622. A Surat consultation dated March 3, 1623 resolved to seize Indian ships and on March 15, 1623 instructions were given to Captain Hall to take Indian ships on his way back from Mokha, and a report of September 27 stated that the English *Dolphin* had captured two Surat ships called *Tawakkul Ali* and *Tari* belonging to Surat. On October 1 came the report that the English had taken the *Ganjawar* with at least a "hundred merchants of quality and is reported to be very rich". To escape the outcry in Surat against such acts, Rastell and others from the Factory quietly fled to a ship at Swally. The Surat Governor because of his other difficulties, temporized. On October 18 Rastell demanded £100,000 as ransom threatening that if the demand went unheeded the English would continue to seize more Indian ships. The merchants and officials of Surat were outraged and after futile requests to the Dutch for assistance the Governor arrested sundry Englishmen and brought them to Surat, put a guard around the English Factory and the native brokers. These actions proved unavailing and finally negotiations were completed by November 10 when the English scaled down their various demands and the incident was closed. Though the English had obviously won their points the Governor's humiliations and the merchants' resentment deeply rankled the city. In May 1632 a small English ship called the *Seahorse* of 100 tons

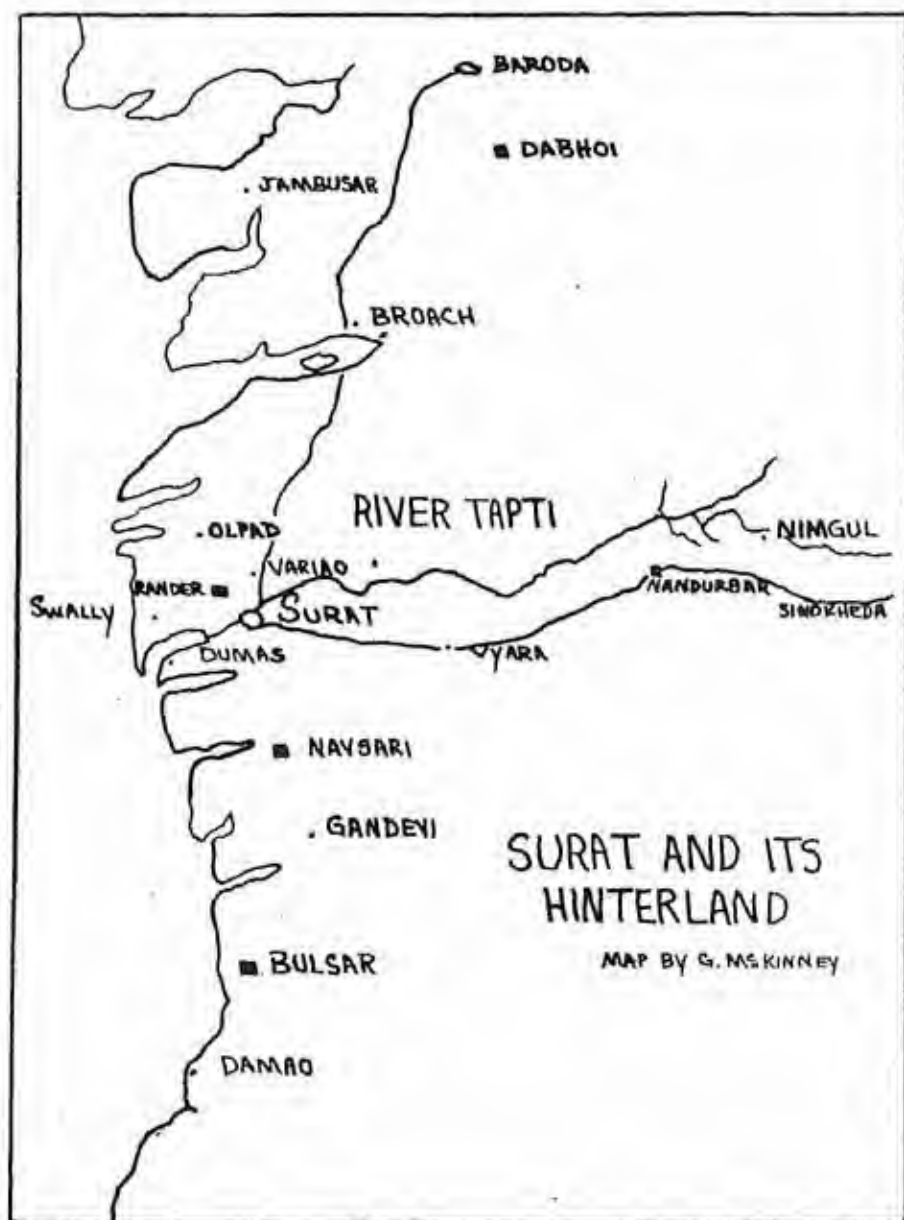
under one Captain Richard Quaille of Portsmouth was ransacking and pillaging traders in the Red Sea and taking great prizes. The English at Surat were aware that they were in obvious danger in the city. In 1635 a very serious situation arose. In September 1635 the ship *Taufiqi* was taken by the English ship *Roebuck* in spite of the Surat ship carrying a safe conduct from the English Factory at Surat. Six months later when the news of the treatment of the *Taufiqi* reached Surat there was a natural cry of indignation both from the authorities and merchants of the city. Methwold, summoned by the Governor, Masih-us-Zaman, offered an explanation which was far from satisfactory. The net result was Methwold was put in confinement and the Factory guarded by Mughal soldiery. English establishments elsewhere were attacked and the matter was not settled until October 1635. In the next three years Methwold did his best to rehabilitate the English position and trade and sailed for home in January 1639.

Methwold was one of the makers of his nation's greatness in the Indian trade. Sir William Foster's tribute to him is well-deserved: "Alike in character and ability, Methwold stood head and shoulders above both his immediate predecessors and his colleagues. His period of office proved to be an exceptionally arduous one. . . yet no danger daunted him; no emergency found him wanting; his cool judgement at once pointed out the course to be pursued, while his energy and fixity of purpose wrested success from even the most adverse conditions. In dealing with the Indian officials and merchants he was courteous and conciliatory, without for a moment forgetting his responsibilities as the representative of a foreign nation".<sup>14)</sup>

It is not necessary for us to go over the succession of the presidents of the English Surat factory. We may notice here briefly the careers of George Oxenden, Gerald Aungier and John Childe because of the important events that occurred in Surat during their days and some of the important decisions taken by the English concerning Bombay and the future disposition of their trade. George Oxenden was born in 1620 and was sent East as a young man. He was appointed President at Surat on October 25, 1661 and was knighted in November of that year. He worked in Surat until his death on July 19, 1669 at the age of 50. It was during his tenure that Shivaji raided Surat in January 1664 and the English defended their factory bravely for which Aurangzeb expressed his appreciation by remitting a part of customs paid at Surat by the English. Gerald Aungier (born 1635? 1640?) arrived in India with Oxenden in 1661. In 1669 he became President at Surat after Oxenden's death, defended the Factory in 1670 against Shivaji's attack and in 1677 went to Bombay, the newly acquired English possession, and became the builder of the future greatness of that city. For the last three years of his life he was ill and he died in Surat on June 30, 1677. His work at Surat and Bombay was eventful for its impact on the development of the English power and prestige both in commerce and in marking the beginnings of the British empire. Fryer writes: "He was a Maecenas of honest studies; a great cherisher of ingenuity; of a generous and free access; masculinely candid; a master of all languages and sciences, as well as skilled



# SURAT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



SURAT AND ITS HINTERLAND

in military virtues. . ." Similar encomia are paid to him by Streynsham Master and Alexander Hamilton and he deserved all the praise given him by his compatriots. John Child is to be remembered for the decision to shift the headquarters of the English from Surat to Bombay with the final transfer being brought about in 1687.<sup>15)</sup>

The administration of the Surat Factory was vested in a President and a council of four members. Writing on April 10, 1621 Thomas Kerridge advised the Company to "give the president full powers" and control over the agents of the Company operating in other parts of India and Persia, to give him a "council at Surat of four sufficient men and a Register constantly resident". There was also the need for experienced factors and other personnel. In 1618 the Surat Factory had six Englishmen employed of whom two were youths and one a steward or book-keeper. In 1628 the number of writers was increased to six. The number of English employees increased to 28 in 1674. In 1624 the salaries of professional employees ranged from £30 to £100 a year and the salary of the President could be up to £500. The staff included accountants, secretaries, registers, writers, surgeons, ministers, tailors, carpenters, bakers, cooks, trumpeters, warehouse-keepers, besides Indian employees such as brokers, *modys* (stewards) and *peons* (messengers and guards).<sup>16)</sup>

In addition to their normal commercial functions the President and his council were also given certain judicial powers. These became necessary because of the presence, temporary or prolonged, of a large number of Englishmen in and around Surat. There were two categories of Englishmen that frequented Surat. One was that of crews of the visiting ships who, after their disembarkation from their ships at Swally, roamed over Swally, Rander and Surat. Very often some of these sailors imbibed toddy and arrack much more than was good for them and in their inebriation fought with the local police authorities. Such incidents occurred from time to time as reported in communications from Surat in 1619, 1623, 1633 and 1651. In some cases such drunken behaviour was punished with instant dismissal or the errands being put into "bilboes for 24 hours" and then to have 20 "drubs" administered to them with a rattan. It was better for the Surat President to handle such cases through his council than to permit the Mughal authorities to deal with them not knowing precisely what the outcome could be.<sup>17)</sup> The standing rules of the Company frowned upon English factors taking wives to India or in India. William Bidulph wrote to the Company on February 15, 1618: "It is an article in your commission that who ever shall have a wife in these parts shall upon knowledge thereof be forthwith dismissed of his place and service and sent home". But this did not prevent liaisons as was shown in the cases of the preacher William Leske who in 1616/1617 admitted having relations with a *Halalkhor* (sweeper) woman, and John Leachland in 1626 who had for some years privately kept an Indian woman and refused to part with her.<sup>18)</sup> The other offences were gambling, desertion, incurring of debts, and apostasy in conversion to Catholicism or Islam.

In all such cases strict action was taken and the offenders punished with fines or even expulsion.<sup>19)</sup>

The English establishment at Surat was a curious amalgam of 'monasticism' and commerce. Except the President all others were forbidden from having their wives with them. They lived together, ate together, prayed together, amused each other and traded on their own personal account privately and contrary to the Company's regulations with each other's tacit consent, including that of the President. Hours of meals were fixed and the fare was sumptuous, cooked in the English, Portuguese, Mughal or Indian manner by a number of cooks maintained on the establishment's roster. The major meal of the day, dinner, contained numerous courses washed down with liberal quantities of wine. There was a sustained demand for beer, and a hot mixture of 'burnt wine' flavoured with cinnamon, cloves and other spices was popular. Punch was a particular discovery of the English in India for the Hindi word means five and the earliest reference to it comes in a letter of September 28, 1632 from Aramgaon to Petapoli. The five ingredients which gave the drink its name were brandy, sugar, lime, spices and water. Wines from Persia and France were much sought after, and toddy and arrack were often used. Chinese *chaw* (tea) was also popular and the use of this new drink in the Factory was noticed in the 1630s and thereafter. On special days such as Christmas there was much fraternizing with the Dutch at parties given in the English garden in the city. Drinks were liberally served at such parties and games like archery played with great enthusiasm.

Some idea of the rules of conduct is given in a communication of April, 1630 from Surat. It calls upon the observance of the Lord's Day in the forenoon as well as afternoon and no excessive feasting and drinking to be allowed. Prayers on weekdays in the mornings and nights must be offered, drunkenness restrained, abominable oaths, "so frequent in most men's mouths" discouraged, the "bestly sin" of whoredom and "polluted filthy talk" at meals and elsewhere be given up. Gaming with dice and cards must be frowned upon. In all transactions of the Company complete loyalty and probity must be maintained.

The Factory had two persons to look after the spiritual and physical health of its members. The Factory had a chapel with a clergyman in attendance. Some of these were far from ideal in their conduct as quite a few indulged in private trade like all other members and others like the Rev. William Leske were a particular disgrace. We have already referred to his relations with a *Halalkhor* woman. But he also had business dealings with the Surat Governor Zulfiqar Khan and sometimes used both offensive language and the whip in his dealings with Indian brokers. He was ordered to be deported in 1616/1617. But later in 1674 we find another clergyman who indulged in "occasional lapses into insobriety", a gentle euphemism for getting drunk and being disorderly. One of the best known ministers was John Ovington (born in 1653) who arrived in Bombay and Surat during 1690-1693 and

to whose chronicle we have so often referred in the course of this work. The Factory also had its own "chirgeon" (surgeon) assisted by a mate. He not only treated members of the establishment but was also, on occasions, available to help emergency cases of injuries to Indians. He received his drugs from England but often also tried out Indian medicines.<sup>20)</sup>

The salaries were generally poor and hence the Company, in spite of repeated warnings, could not stop the practice of private trade by its employees in India. William Bidulph, one of the earliest factors, complained on October 28, 1613: "I get but 40 Rials of 8 per annum, which will not find me apparel, all things being very dear and nothing durable". The Factory's peons received 5 to 7 mahmudis per month until 1628 and the rate increased to 10 mahmudis in 1630. Frequently very young boys were sent out as apprentices and had to be taught to read and write first. There were frequent requests to London to send out young men as carpenters, caulkers, coopers, smiths, tailors and ropemakers and these were paid but a pittance. A Surat letter of 1665 says: "We desire you to send us a half a dozen youths of mean parentage, who write good hands and shall be willing to be employed upon occasions without murmuring". The Company encouraged its employees in India to learn the local languages and quite a few were fluent in Persian and Hindustani. But whatever their social background almost all employees learned the advantage of private trade soon after their arrival in India.<sup>21)</sup>

The English President assumed almost regal airs on occasions of his public appearance. Ovington states: "The President on solemn days generally invites the whole Factory abroad to some pleasant garden adjacent to the city, where they may sit shaded from the beams of the sun and refreshed by the neighbourhood of tanks and water-works. The President and his lady are brought hither in palanquins, supported each of them by six peons, which carry them by four at once on their shoulders. Before him at a little distance, are carried two large flags, or English ensigns, with curious Persian or Arabian horses of state, which are of great value, rich in their trappings, and gallantly equipped that are led before him". There was also a guard of armed men accompanying the procession and trumpeteers sounded the progress of the company in all solemnity.<sup>22)</sup>

All this pomp and circumstance was intended to impress the natives of Surat. Most of the Presidents made it a point to behave courteously toward the authorities as well as the brokers and others who worked for them. With powerful merchants such as Virji Vora and Haji Zahid Beg they had to cultivate relations of friendliness and respect because very often the English needed their assistance especially of Vora who was their greatest banker. On occasions, however, they did behave in an insolent manner as Roe remarked on February 14, 1618: "But it is true we would be lords there, and have committed so many insolencies that I have wondered at their patience". Particularly obnoxious was President Andrews whose arrogance caused no end of trouble for the English with the Governor Mirza Arab who was determined to "be known Governor". The English were not beyond taking re-

course to bribery and corruption of Mughal officials, and used Indian merchants to circumvent Mughal regulations on quite a few occasions. But, by and large, amicable relations were maintained between the Factory and the people of Surat.<sup>23)</sup>

## (2)

The advent of European trade in the seventeenth century was an event of major commercial and urban importance for Surat. Available figures, imperfect as they are, give us a general idea of the volume of trade generated in the city by the English alone. During the first half of the century (1615-1645) some 60 English ships visited Surat and exported cargo worth over £1,400,382. In the second half of the century (1658-1707) as many as 79 ships touched Swally and brought in stock worth over £1,174,189. Figures for all the years are not available though reasonable estimates of the monetary value of exports of goods and import of goods and money may be made on the basis of the available information. The exports from Surat could have been over £3 million and imports of goods and money over the same period could have been to the order of an equal amount. These do not include the English dealings in goods and money used for the inter-Asian trade which could have been at least 40% of the value of the trade to and with England and Europe. This could have been up to £2,500,000. The English impact then, in monetary terms for Surat was the infusion of close to £10 million in monies and goods. Between 1658 and 1681 Surat received £1,167,000 in money and a total of £2,071,000 in money and goods from the English and accounted for 33% of the total exports from all English establishments in the East. In terms of commodities Surat exported some 8,794,000 pieces of textiles through the English establishment during 1658-1694.<sup>24)</sup> In terms of money earned by Surat merchants through brokerage and sales and employment for hundreds of craftsmen and artisans the English provided a very significant impetus for Surat's general prosperity.

Concerning the other aspect of English trade, namely the English participation in the inter-Asian trade, the English impact was less than beneficial. The major reason for this English participation, in the earlier stages at least, was the restriction placed on the export of bullion from England to the East by the East India Company. The prevailing economic thinking looked upon such export as ruinous to the national wealth and consequently serious restrictions were imposed on such exports. In the earliest phase export of bullion was restricted to £30,000 which was raised to £60,000 and £100,000 per year in 1616 and 1617. This was far less than needed to buy Indian goods especially due to the poor demand in India for English imports. These were the English woollens and luxury fabrics, ceramics and glassware and precious stones and pearls. These were bought largely by the Mughal nobility in Surat and Agra but these customers were much less than completely desirable for the obvious reason that they dictated their own prices and



took their own time in making payments. On the other hand the English had to go on constantly making purchases of Indian indigo, textiles, saltpetre and other items to get ladings ready for their ships on their homeward voyages. As Roe stated in 1618: "There is no complaints by the Mughals subjects that we buy not their commodity, but contrary that we buy so much that their own merchants want for the Red Sea. I know it is true. We have raised the price of all we deal in, and now we fear the Dutch will make it worse". Elsewhere we have referred to instances of protests from merchants and craftsmen in Surat, Broach and Baroda against the large volume of English buying of Indian commodities. To solve the problem of shortages of needed gold and silver the English perceived, from very early on, the advantages of exporting Indian commodities to the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and the Southeast Asian areas. With their naval superiority and strong positions at Ormuz and elsewhere the English were able to override all Indian objections and establish themselves as major dealers in Indian goods such as textiles in the traditional Indian markets overseas. This economic penetration on their part meant loss of the traditional trade for Indian merchants.<sup>25)</sup>

Roe expressed the effects of this trade saying: "The merchants of this place (Surat) are also undone by our trade to the southwards which has taken (as we may term it) the meat out of their mouths and overthrown their trade that way. . . . Since our coming this port is undone, which in their grief they spare not sometimes to tell us."<sup>26)</sup>

The English naval strength was also a source of income for the Surat establishment. The Company's fleet used ships varying in tonnage from 300 to 1000. From the very beginning they were well-armed carrying from 4 to 40 guns. They took from about six to eight months to make a trip to India and a similar time for the return voyage. They were also used, in the interval between their arrival at Swally and departure for England, for the inter-Asian trade and in addition the Company also maintained a fleet of country-built ships of lesser tonnage but armed for the coastal traffic. Increasingly the merchants of Surat were compelled to use these English ships for sending passengers and freight to Persia or Achin. This activity earned for Surat a tidy sum of money. Thus during 1623 and 1664, a random sampling shows, Surat earned over £40,000 in carrying Indian freight. The actual figure must be much larger, closer to £100,000 and as has been mentioned elsewhere in this work the cost of building a medium-sized country ship for coastal traffic could be more than recovered in a few trips carrying freight for the Surat merchants. Bal Krishna states that the carrying trade was expected to produce £125,000 at an expense of £20,000 and often made a gross profit of £155,000 per year in the Indies.<sup>27)</sup>

The implications of the English almost taking over the inter-Asian and carrying trades were ominous not only for the Surat merchants but for the maritime Indian commercial enterprise as well. Increasingly the Indian merchants lost their commanding position in the Asian trade and gradually became no more than

*dalals* or intermediaries for the English, Dutch and the French. They were still valuable for their skills in finding goods, transporting them to the ports and acting as intermediaries between the European traders and the Indian rulers. They were indispensable as brokers, bankers, and linguists (*dubashis*) but their former dominant position as independent merchants was in a process of rapid erosion. The age of Virji Vora, the great merchant-prince of Surat, was yielding place to Anada Ranga Pillai, the famous *dubhash* of the French in South India in the eighteenth century.

The English establishment in Surat, as remarked above, did generate considerable employment for a large number of brokers, packers, weavers, dyers, washers, carpenters, smiths and other men. Merchants such as Tapidas, Hari Vaishya, Haji Zahid Beg, Virji Vora and the Parekhs (Bhimji and his successors) earned enormous amounts of money through trading with the English. Another source of large incomes was from lending money to the English from time to time. This was done as much by the great merchants such as Virji Vora as by the brokers and *shroffs*. Some idea of the large-scale borrowing by the English comes from a random sampling of figures of English debts between 1619-1677 and these aggregate to around £900,000. In 1694 the English debt in Surat amounted to £257,062 10s. The rate of interest depended upon the availability of cash in the Surat money-market and varied between 6% to 18% per annum. Considering the large amounts borrowed at a time and the number of months during which interest accumulated the Surat bankers certainly reaped great profits by lending money to the English.<sup>28)</sup>

### (3)

The Dutch were the most serious competitors of the English in Surat throughout the seventeenth century. In 1602, the year that saw the foundation of the United Dutch East India Company (VOC), two Dutchmen seem to have visited Surat. In 1606/1607, before Hawkins arrived in Surat, a Dutch merchant David Van Deynse came to Surat to explore possibilities of trade.<sup>29)</sup> In the first two decades of the seventeenth century the Dutch had begun to penetrate Java and the initiative for establishing Dutch trade in Surat came from Bantam. Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the builder of the Dutch Empire in Java, had begun to appreciate the importance of trade in Surat and other parts of India for the Dutch effectively to participate in the inter-Asian trade. Especially valuable were the textiles and indigo from the Surat area which could also serve as a market for the spices from the Indonesian islands over which the Dutch had begun to impose their monopolistic control. Another enterprising Dutchman, Gillis Pieterszoon Van Ravestyn, came out east and was senior merchant (*opperkoopman*) in Petapoli in 1610. He travelled overland from Masulipatam to Surat where he arrived in 1615 and returned to Masulipatam a year later. He returned to Surat with Van den Brocke and later became chief of the Factory there.<sup>30)</sup> By the time Brocke came to take charge of

the Surat establishment the Dutch were already firmly established there. The English reactions to the Dutch presence in the first two decades reflect the apprehension felt by them. A communication of March 1616/1617 refers to the Dutch influence in all parts of India and writing in 1618 Roe stated: "The Fleminge is planted at Surat (and) hath obtained a *firman* upon as good terms almost as we" He advised his compatriots: "You must speedily look to this maggot. . .but these will eat a woorme in your sides" and declared that the two dangers to the English were the pirates and the Dutch, adding "They (the Dutch) wrong you in all parts and grow insufferable insolencies". He went on to say: "I have done my best to disgrace them, but could not turn them out without further danger".<sup>31)</sup> This uneasy relationship persisted through the decades. Occasionally the Dutch helped the English as in 1619 when they redeemed one of the imprisoned servants of the English for 120 mahmudis; on special days the Dutch and the English mixed with each other socially in "extraordinary cheer". In 1623 Broecke even interceded between the English and the Mughal authorities at Surat. At other times the Dutch gave protection to Indian junks and in 1623 they were accused of instigating the natives to arrest and imprison the English. Petty frustrations were not unusual. An English letter of November 20, 1623 complains that the Dutch had monopolized all carts and in 1624 Broecke assisted Surat junks against the English by flying Dutch flags on them. The Anglo-Dutch wars (1639-54 and 1665) naturally set the two nations against each other in Surat and the Dutch competition for Surat freight in their own ships cut into the English business. At Baroda, Broach, Ahmadabad and Agra the Dutch proved to be a serious threat to the English commercial needs.<sup>32)</sup>

The Dutch counterpart of the English William Methwold was Pieter van den Broecke who was the founder of the Dutch trade in Surat. He was Director at Surat from 1620 to 1629 and it was largely due to his efforts and skill that the Surat Dutch Factory came to occupy an important position in the city's trade. Broecke was born in Antwerp on February 25, 1585 and worked for the Dutch Company from 1613 onward until his death in 1640. He first came to India in 1617 and with Van Ravesteyn established the Dutch Factory in Surat. He became chief of the the Surat establishment in 1620. He had an extensive experience of Dutch dealings in Java and West Asia and was thoroughly conversant with Dutch needs and opportunities for trade in India. By 1622 he already had an investment of £30,000 in progress from Surat and when he left in December 1629 he turned over to his successor Fl. 241,113 for buying indigo at Biana, Fl. 36,865 at Ahmadabad and other but smaller amounts at other places where the Dutch had begun to maintain their own agents. It was during Broecke's tenure that another perceptive Dutch agent Francisco Pelsaert worked as an assistant at Surat for three years (1624-1627) and left behind an interesting account of his observations on India.<sup>33)</sup>

As was the case with the English the Dutch too had some problems in finding suitable accommodation for their factory in Surat. Their first house in 1616 was

rented from Khwaja Hasan Ali at an annual rent of 66 mahmudis. In 1623, during Broecke's tenure, the Dutch moved to a bigger new house owned by Pahlvan Safed at an annual rent of 1250 mahmudis. It is probably this house which Pietro Della Valle visited in that year. About the Dutch establishment he says: "The President of the Hollanders, called by them *Commandator*, who resides in Surat and had the general superintendence of their affairs in all these parts of the East, is at this time Sig: Pietro Vandenbroecke, a gentleman of good breeding, and very courteous; he speaks no Italian, but Spanish very well, as being born in Antwerp. He lives in a goodly palace, which hath many distinct apartments, with several entrances into a court, like so many different houses, only included within the same wall, which is entered into by one great gate: here the Commandator holds the best, and largest, apartment, to himself; in the rest lodge some of their gravest merchants, which are of the council for management of affairs, in order to their better convenience, and union, besides many others of inferior condition, which live out of this great enclosure, dispersed elsewhere in the city, and when occasion requires, they all repair to the palace of the Commandator". The traveller refers to his attendance at a wedding of a Dutchman held in this building. In January 1664, at the time of Shivaji's attack on Surat, the Dutch house is described as being located in the southern part of the town standing "among tiled and thatched houses" which were set on fire though the Dutch house escaped destruction. Fryer, in 1675 refers to the Dutch "sweet garden, shored up with timber from the encroaching river".

Like the English the Dutch ate and lived well. Pieter Van Dam tells us of a wine list of 1678 which included beer, Persian wine and wines of other sorts. In 1619 the Surat Dutch establishment had a total of 18 employees and a list of 1638 mentions the Director, chief merchant, assistant merchants (*onderkoopman*), assistants to merchants, accountants (*fiscal*), general superintendent of the buildings (*houckhouder general*) and lodgers (*pensionaris*) as among the various members. Van Dam gives us a list of the various functionaries and their salaries. The Director was paid F1. 180 with lesser amounts for the others all of whom made a group of some 45 persons. Some of these were posted to establishments at Broach, Baroda, Ahmadabad, Burhanpur and Agra.<sup>34</sup>

The public appearances of the Chief at Surat and arriving dignitaries from Batavia were accompanied by great pomp with trumpeters and musketmen marching with the procession. An English letter from Surat of February 1665 tells us of one such occasion: "In the Dutch ships came a Commissary in great state, who in the time of his abode here, took place of this Commandore, and came to this town attended with a file of musquetiers of their own nation, that waited upon him wherever he went." Unlike the English the Dutch permitted their employees to get married and in many cases the brides were either Armenians, Syrians or Indians converted to Christianity. This was a part of the Dutch programme of colonization for these men when sent to Java went with their wives and children and added to

the Dutch population of Batavia. Della Valle says that many Dutchmen had their wives with them in Surat, "which they married in India, purposely to go with them, and people a new colony of theirs in Java Major, which they call Batavia Nova; where very great privileges are granted to such of their countrymen as shall go to live there with wives, and families: for which end many of them, for want of European, have taken Indian, Armenian and Syrian, women, and of any race that falls into their hands, so they be, or can be made, Christians". Della Valle attended one such wedding at the Surat Dutch house, that of the Dutchman Guiglielmo to Mariam, daughter of an Armenian or Syrian merchant resident at Ahmadabad.<sup>35)</sup>

The Dutch records have preserved the names of a great many Dutchmen who served in Surat and elsewhere during the seventeenth century. Among the directors at Surat were Jan Van Hazel (1628-1632), successor to Broecke, Barent Pietszoon (1634-1640), Paulus Croock (Crooca) (1640-1643), Arend Barendszoon (1644-1649), Jan Van Teylingen (1649-1651), Geraldo Pelgrom (1651-1655), Leonard Winninx (1659-1662), Andreas Bogaert (1667-1671), and William Volger (1672-1676). Among others of interest mention may be made of Van Twist who has written an interesting account of India in the 1630s.<sup>36)</sup>

As mentioned at the outset the Dutch were the most serious of the European competitors for the English in seventeenth-century Surat. Both nations competed in buying more or less the same commodities such as textiles, indigo, saltpetre and other agricultural products including tobacco. Both bought in the same places, Surat, Broach, Baroda, Burhanpur and Agra, and both maintained their trading establishments at all of these places. In 1634 the Dutch decided to close all their factories except Surat and Batavia sent Pieter Vlack with those instructions. But later we find them continuing their buying activities at all the places as before. The Dutch also took over a part of the freight trade in the Indian Ocean area and an English communication of 1644 complained that Indian merchants preferred to ship their goods on Dutch carriers rather than English ships "finding there much better accommodation and no less safety". In most places they put the English at a disadvantage by bidding higher prices for textiles and indigo and even paying more for the hiring of pack animals and carts.<sup>37)</sup>

The Dutch had one decisive advantage over the English in their mercantile operations in Surat and that was their control over much of the trade in cloves, cinnamon and other spices of the Indonesian islands. Through the seventeenth century the Dutch had acquired military and political control over large parts of Java, Sumatra, the Celebes, Moluccas and the Malayan coast on the Straits of Malacca. This territorial control they used to exclude others from buying directly from the Indonesian rulers except in Achin in Sumatra. The English records bristle with bitter complaints against the Hollanders' tactics of such an exclusion.<sup>38)</sup> They practically 'commanded' the clove market in Surat as is shown by the fact that during 28 years from 1671 to 1698 they sold, by auction, 2,204,135½ lbs. of cloves in Surat alone for F1. 10,527,316:6 (one Dutch guilder=2 English



shillings). These were sold to 14 separate dealers among whom were Mirza Masum, Kissandas and Mirza Muhammad Zahid. An English letter of February 17, 1665 from Surat tells us that a Dutch dignitary from Batavia had arrived in Surat and had sold shiploads of several kinds of merchandise "in a lump together to Haji Zahid Beg, baulking their former merchant Virji Vora, who usually was their customer". That this was going on since the 1630s is indicated by another English communication of January 31, 1634 which states; "for already the Dutch hath as fair quarter in Surat and Persia as the English have, and doth not fail to supply those places with more goods than you do of the same sort, and also such as you have none, viz. spices and Chinaware of all sorts, to the value of a hundred thousand pounds in Persia by report". The Dutch were well supplied with money at their Surat establishment for investments in the local and interior markets as is indicated by figures ranging over the period from 1633 to 1674 the lowest amount being F1. 40,000 for the year 1657 and the highest close on a million guilders in years 1633 and 1653. For a period of 15 years picked at random from the 1630s to the 1670s the total capital with the Surat Dutch factory amounted to F1. 8,147,044. During 17 years in the same period they spent in Surat some F1. 6,334,553 earned in Surat on sale of their commodities, principally spices from the Indonesian islands in 13 years picked at random between the 1620s and 1670s, F1. 5,226,959. In a period of seven years they shipped to Batavia goods worth F1. 3,157,962 the figures rising from F1. 102,000 in 1622 to F1. 1,331,925 in 1652. In six years they shipped to Surat from Batavia goods worth some F1. 3,101,456 and their net profits in Surat during a period of 17 years amounted to F1. 6,341,379. Their freight earnings are also equally noteworthy for in seven years they amounted to F1. 217,575. These figures give us only a part of the total picture but the random selection of the years and the amounts earned, spent and profits made give us a good idea of the monetary impact of their trade on the markets in Surat. As against that a Dutch communication of May 21, 1668 states that in one year the English at Surat earned F1. 51,135 and spent F1. 73,668!<sup>39)</sup>

From the stray figures mentioned above for both the English and Dutch purchases and sales in the markets of Surat it is obvious that the Dutch had a more favourable balance of trade. This was, as has been indicated above, due to their almost monopolistic control over the spice trade of Indonesia and the large share in the tin trade from Malaya as well as Chinese and Japanese silks, copper and chinaware, commodities not only in good demand in India but also carrying a good margin of profit. With the English the Dutch had made serious incursions into the carrying trade and the inter-Asian trade of Surat and thus the European traders had, to a very significant extent, undermined the business activities of the Surat merchants who gradually began to play the role largely that of intermediaries for the European traders. This European penetration of Surat's mercantile economy was a significant fact of the city's urban and economic history during the seventeenth century.

Dutch relations with the Mughal authorities at Surat and Agra bore the same characteristics as those of English relations namely, periods of conflict alternating with spells of cordiality. The Dutch complained of Mughal arbitrariness and high-handedness while they had themselves imposed restrictive measures on Gujarati participation in the trade of territories in Asia under their military and political control. What they demanded was that the Mughals should offer them facilities for free and unhampered trade while they excluded the Mughal's subjects from trade in their own colonial territories or else to trade there on their own Dutch terms.

But the Dutch operations in Surat also meant a large volume of business for the city's markets and merchants. The Dutch brought cloves, mace, nutmeg and cinnamon and sold it to merchants in Surat often in very large quantities to a single buyer. They also brought copper and tin from East Asia and Malaya and coffee from West Asia. The volume of their purchases in Surat can be estimated from the fact that between 1699 and 1702, a period of four years, they shipped from Surat 1,144,720 pieces of textiles and 390,059 lbs. of indigo. The total amount involved in their commercial transactions in Surat during this period came to Fl. 4,286,409:7:8.<sup>40)</sup> On an average, therefore, the Dutch commerce in Surat meant an infusion of some one million guilders a year.

Like the English the Dutch also operated through a number of native brokers. The foremost broker for the Dutch was Mohandas Parekh whose career has been referred to elsewhere in this work. But they also dealt with two other leading merchants Virji Vora and Haji Zahid Beg. During 1671 and 1698 they sold their spices to as many as 14 different merchants of Surat. In the early days it was their practice to deal with a few brokers year after year but by the middle of the century, after receiving complaints that such a practice was subject to favouritism and other abuses, they began to sell to the highest bidder.<sup>41)</sup> Their broker Mohandas Parekh was reputed to be a millionaire and it is reasonable to assume that the other brokers who worked for the Dutch also made great profits for themselves through the Dutch trade. The profits made by the Dutch factory at Surat ranged between 40% to 400% and the impact of their buying activities was felt not only in Surat but also in the other towns of Gujarat and northern India. In addition to these places the Dutch had trading interests on the Coromandel coast and on the west coast, especially Wengurla, Raybag and Rajapur. Their trade in copper and tin was especially lucrative both in terms of quantities and profits. In 1678, for instance, they sold some 200,000 lbs. of tin at Surat and they expected to secure between 40,000 lbs. to 50,000 lbs. of indigo every year at Sarkhej alone. As early as the 1620s and 1630s during the time of Coen the Dutch planned to sell spices and Chinese goods in Mokha the cash proceeds of which were then used to buy Indian goods for the Indonesian islands as well as Holland. It was this trade in goods from China, Japan, Java, Sumatra and Malaya in Surat and elsewhere which paid them richly. In these they often undersold the English as a communication

from Swally to London of December 29, 1634 states that the Dutch had sold their quicksilver and vermillion at 42 rupees per maund, "a price whereunto it never yet descended". From these accounts it seems that the Dutch were more fortunately situated and more aggressive as traders than the English in many cases.<sup>42)</sup>

The Dutch strove to cultivate especially favourable relations with the local Mughal officials whenever possible. Thus Broecke tried to work out a smooth-working relationship with the officials at Surat and Broach and from time to time attempts were also made to send special missions to the imperial court in Agra as in 1642 when Cornelis Weijland visited Agra. As usual Mughal officials expected handsome gifts and these were tendered however grudgingly. But when the Dutch felt that they were treated harshly or unfairly they did not hesitate to use their armed naval might against Indian shipping in retaliation. Their ships were armed with 20 or more guns and were constantly sailing in the Indian ocean area where the Surat ships were easy prey for them. In April 1648 the Dutch house in Surat was attacked by a group of some 100 armed men who for three hours ransacked the establishment. The Dutch in Surat believed that such an attack could not have been carried out without the connivance of the city Government and demanded compensation. When this was not forthcoming promptly they attempted to close the Indian trade in the Malay Peninsula and Achin. At the end of July 1648 they sent a strong fleet to Surat and subsequently took some Indian junks. In 1649 they also seized a ship belonging to the Emperor and finally an accommodation was arrived at whereby the Dutch received some compensation and were given facilities for adequate protection for their goods. In all this turmoil Muiz-ul-Mulk, the Governor of Surat, was replaced by Mirza Arab. But in this episode the Dutch had more than adequately demonstrated to the Mughals that they were quite capable of looking after their own interests in any way they chose because of their naval might.<sup>43)</sup> Another incident occurred in August 1700 when there was a dispute between them and the Surat Governor and in February 1703/1704 they seized a ship belonging to the leading merchant of Surat, Abdul Gafur, to put pressure on the Surat Government to settle Dutch grievances in the city. The causes of such conflicts stemmed from disputes in the charging of customs duties and sale of certain specific commodities. But such armed confrontations were exceptions.

#### (4)

The French were not only the last of the European traders to set up their establishment in Surat but their stay there was the briefest, lasting a little more than 25 years. French ships had sailed in the Asian areas before the establishment of their Surat factory and French Capuchin missionaries were active in Surat much before the arrival of French merchants. Manucci refers to a small Capuchin church in the city and a Father Ambrosio who was in charge of the missionary establishment in 1656. In January 1664 Shivaji, during his raid on Surat, spared the Capuchins, and Mohandas Parekh, the well-known Dutch broker, was reputed to be a

generous donor to the Capuchin as he provided rice, butter and vegetables to the missionaries as a part of his charities to religious establishments in the city. Later the French factory enlisted the Capuchins for help in their council in a consultative capacity.<sup>44)</sup>

The French Factory in Surat was established in 1667 when François Caron arrived in Surat on December 1667 from Madagascar with a cargo of £45,000. Manucci states that the French had a "handsome factory" in Surat and Abbé Carre informs us that in 1673 the Surat *Shah Bunder* Sayyid Mahmud was trying to secure for himself the French house "as it was in the best situation in the town and port".

From its very inception the Surat French Factory was plagued by internal dissensions. Soon after Caron's arrival animosities between him and an Armenian agent called Macara developed and charges and countercharges of cheating and attempted murder were bandied about. The French *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* was established under the direct patronage of the great minister Colbert and his King Louis XIV and operated almost as an arm of the French government in Paris. Unlike its English and Dutch counterparts the French Company depended directly and continuously on governmental patronage and financing and was thus directly involved in the politics of the French court. Its management was wasteful and inefficient and competition from the English and the Dutch formidable.

In Surat the French bought Indian textiles, indigo and other commodities and had their own brokers working for them in Surat, Broach, Baroda, Ahmadabad and other centres. Among these brokers one Samson was the most influential. Abbé Carre calls him "one of the most cunning and clever Hindus of his time". His work was highly regarded both by Caron and his successor M. Blot but received nothing but a watchful coldness from M. Gueston, the third Director-General. Samson, according to Abbe Carre, had done very well for himself in French service for five years. He had "acquired three or four fine vessels, which were always on voyages to the richest kingdoms of the East and brought him immense wealth. Even in this year (1672) he had a ship called the *Pearl* which he had freighted to the Company on half profits, and which M. Caron had sent to M. Blot. Moreover, the broker had built two or three splendid houses in the centre of the town, whereas he had hardly a roof to his head before the French came to Surat".

In October 1670, when Shivaji raided Surat, the French according to an English account, "made a private peace for themselves, on what terms we cannot learn; and so never shot off a gun, though at first being strong in men, they vapoured as if they would have fought the whole army themselves". The report also alleges that the French allowed Shivaji's men to pass through their factory to attack the Tartar quarters. But, as Malleson points out, this aspersion is unwarranted for the French had but few men with them against Shivaji's numerous soldiers and the damage done to the Tartar *sarai* cannot be solely blamed on the French.<sup>45)</sup> But whatever the English may have thought of the French action in 1670 they were

sufficiently impressed with French might when a French squadron under Admiral de la Haye arrived at Surat toward the end of September 1671. Abbé Carré states: "The arrival of such a powerful fleet struck terror all over the Indies; everyone discussed it according to his own ideas and wishes. Some were delighted; others were amazed that the French in so short a time since their appearance in India had been able to make such great plans and to assemble so powerful a fleet of war-ships". The Dutch spread a rumour that the fleet was really a group of corsairs bent on pillaging Indian ships and destroying Indian trade. As a result the Mughal authorities in Surat were much less than cordial and created difficulties for the revictualling of the ships, so de la Haye confined his men to their ships. After a stay of some three months the fleet sailed for Ceylon. Though impressive in its strength this French naval presence in Surat did little to bolster their trade.<sup>46)</sup>

In spite of very inauspicious circumstances such as the opposition from their European rivals and the poor management of their own establishment the French were able to offer serious commercial competition to the English and the Dutch at Surat. From time to time they sent off cargoes from Surat worth £30,000 at a time and in 1671 the English were complaining that French competition had lowered prices of European commodities and raised those of Indian goods in Surat and elsewhere. The French fortunes were rehabilitated by Francois Martin who was at Surat during 1680-1686 first as second to Baron and on his death in 1683 as Director. However, the French had begun to develop their interests in south India (Pondicherry) and Bengal (Chandranagore) which affected their trade in Surat. The internal affairs of their house in Surat continued to be in turmoil, distrust, extravagance and frustration and soon after the turn of the century the French ended their efforts in Surat leaving considerable debts behind.

The continued presence and extensive operations of the European traders was a fact of extraordinary significance in the commercial and urban history of Surat. The English, Dutch and the French lived and worked alongside each other competing for buying Indian goods and selling European and Asian merchandise more or less on a footing of equality of opportunities. They drew into their network a large class of brokers who depended on the European traders for their wealth. Leading merchants such as Virji Vora and Haji Muhammad Zaid became their influential commercial contacts and bankers. Such conditions in a city of the size of Surat did not exist in any other Indian city except perhaps Ahmadabad and Agra but the nature and volume of trade in the last two cities were both qualitatively and quantitatively different. Neither of those cities saw the rise of a large and wealthy commercial class that depended to such an extent on foreign trade. The case with Bombay, Madras and Calcutta was altogether different for all these cities were under the political control of the English. Surat was a part of the Mughal empire and remained so until at least the larger part of the first half of the eighteenth century. During the century under survey the Mughal writ still ran and the Europeans, whatever their naval superiority, could not for long or completely



flout Mughal authority. The co-existence and sustained commercial operations of the European traders through a long period of a century under Mughal sovereignty and against competition from each other as well as Indian traders makes Surat an interesting case in the urban and commercial history of seventeenth-century India.



## GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS

- Acahar*: highly spiced pickles
- Adowaye*: carrier of goods under contract
- Amin*: revenue official
- Arrack*: liquor distilled from palm juice
- Baftas*: calico, plain and coloured, from Gujarat
- Bajra*: spiked or pearl millet, a common cereal for the poorer sections
- Bakshi*: Mughal paymaster
- Bania (Vania)*: merchant and/or money-lender, member of the third (vaishya) 'caste-cluster' in Hindu society
- Batta (Vatav)*: discount, allowance, commission
- Chawbuck*: whip of raw-hide
- Chop (chaap)*: stamp or seal for marking goods at customs inspection
- Chopda (rojmel, khata or rojnama)*: account-book or ledger maintained by merchants
- Choultry*: public hall or caravansarai
- Chunam*: lime used for plaster and in *pan* (leaf of betel vine)
- Cos (Kos)*: a measure of distance usually about two and one-half miles
- Crore (Karor)*: ten millions
- Dalal*: agent, middleman
- Dam*: a copper coin, up to 40 dams = one rupee
- Dasturi (Vatav)*: commission for exchanging currencies
- Diwali*: Hindu Festival of Lights in October-November
- Diwan*: Provincial revenue officer
- Dubashi*: linguist, interpreter
- Duttee*: coarse but strong cloth from western India used for making sails and for packing
- Faqir (Fakir)*: Muslim 'holy' man
- Faujdar*: commander of an armed unit to assist the civil administration of a province or city
- Firman*: royal order or proclamation or charter
- Ghat*: built-up sections of river banks with steps leading to the water
- Ghee*: clarified butter used as a cooking medium or with rice
- Halalkhor*: sweeper, worker in household and public sanitation
- Holi*: Hindu spring festival
- Hukkah*: 'hubble-bubble', with a container for tobacco resting on a stem mounted in a pot for plain or fragrant water with a long mouthpiece
- Hundi*: bank draft used by merchants and money-lenders for transmitting sums especially between towns and cities
- Jagir*: revenue assignment to persons with or without military rank and with administrative duties associated with it

*Jezia (jizia)*: poll tax levied by Muslim rulers from Hindus

*Jogi*: Hindu 'holy' man

*Jowar*: Indian millet

*Kotwal*: police chief of a city

*Kaphila (Caphila)*: caravan of bullocks laden with goods

*Lac*: resinous substance for making crimson and scarlet dyes, also used for sealing

*Lac (lakh)*: 100,000

*Mahajan*: either a council of business leaders or chief of the business community

*Maidan*: open space used for military reviews, public gatherings or seasonal markets

*Mahal*: administrative and revenue division

*Mahmudi (Mahmoodi)*: silver coin used principally in western India; between two-fifths and four-ninths of a rupee, worth up to one shilling

*Mansab*: military rank with emoluments paid either in cash or revenue assignment and with requirements of maintaining number of troops assigned; often associated with administrative duties

*Maund (Man)*: unit of weight equal to up to 40 *seers* or between 51.63 lbs. and 55.32 lbs.

*Mazur*: porter

*Modi (Mody)*: steward responsible for purchase of supplies

*Mir Saman*: controller of households of the governor or high administrative officer

*Mussom (Mosum)*: Monsoon; seasonal winds and rains occurring chiefly between June and September

*Mufti*: theological assistant to Qazi in matters of Islamic jurisprudence

*Muhtasib*: censor of public morals

*Mutsaddi*: administrator of a port city

*Nabab (Nabob, Nawab)*: high official in charge of provincial administration, associated with mansab rank

*Nakooda (Nakhuda)*: captain of an Indian ship

*Nayait*: newly-arrived; either new converts to Islam or newly arrived Muslims from foreign parts

*Nishan*: stamp, seal or signature or a document in the nature of a charter

*Omrah (Umrav)*: nobleman

*Pan*: leaf of the betel vine treated with chunam, areca nut, catechu, cardamom and made into a roll secured with a clove and chewed by Indians, producing red salivation

*Panrapole (Pinjrapole)*: shelter for decrepit or sick animals and/or birds maintained as an act of charity

*Pargana*: territorial and/or revenue subdivision of a *sarkar*; also sometimes called *mahal*

*Pice (Paisa)*: copper coin, also called *dam*

*Quiladar (Kiledar)*: commander of a fort

*Rahdari*: transit dues assessed on value of goods

*Rupee (Ropia)*: silver coin worth up to 40 *dams*, about two shillings and three pence

*Sadhu*: Hindu 'holy' man

*Sanad*: letters patent, charter, document pertaining to official appointments, property rights or commercial privileges

*Sadr*: judge and supervisor of Muslim religious endowments

*Sarai (Serai)*: rest house for travellers, especially merchants

*Sarkar*: territorial and/or revenue subdivision of a province (*subah*)

*Sari*: one piece garment usually five or six yards long and between 48 and 52 inches wide with decorated borders and end part for the shoulder, worn by Hindu women

*Sati (Suttee)*: immolation of the widow on the husband's funeral pyre

*Seer (Ser)*: unit of weight up to thirty *dams*; up to 40 *seers* = one *maund*

*Seribaffs*: fine muslin of western India occasionally dyed red or blue

*Shah Bunder*: harbour-master responsible for movement of ships, collection of customs and movement of goods

*Shroff (Saraf)*: money-changer, also dealer in bullion

*Subah*: province

*Talao*: tank with built-up sides with steps leading to the water

*Tamgha*: transit tax often illegally levied by provincial or district officers for personal profit

*Tanda (Caphila, Kaphila)*: caravan of bullocks laden with goods

*Tanksal*: government mint

*Toddy*: beverage made from fermented palm juice

*Tophi (Tuhafa)*: present, gift in expectation of favours

*Ulama*: Islamic theologian

*Vakil*: attorney, agent, representative

*Vatav (Wataw)*: commission for exchanging currencies

*Waqianavis*: newswriter, reporter, intelligence officer





## NOTES

### *Notes on Chapter One*

- 1) For the 'palimpsest' idea see C. H. Martin, "The Town as a Palimpsest" in H. J. Dyos (Ed.), *The Study Of Urban History*, p. 155.
- 2) For various definitions see H. Saalman, *Medieval Cities*, p. 11; Dyos (Ed.), *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 1, 156; P. J. Ucko-et al. (eds.), *Man, Settlement And Urbanism*, Pp. xxi, 560; G. S. Sjoberg, *The Preindustrial City*, p. 27; A. Toynbee (Ed.), *Cities Of Destiny*, p. 13; Max Weber, *The City*, Pp. 65-68.
- 3) D.R. Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution Of India*, Pp. 6-8.
- 4) Broecke, II, Pp. 277, 309, 320, 323, 344; FEI, V, p. 300; Ovington, Pp. 203-204.
- 5) Broecke, II, p. 258; Mandelslo, p. 31.
- 6) T & C, Pp. 21, 163; EFI, Pp. 133-136; Della Valle, I, p. 30; De Laet, p. 17; Manucci, I, p. 60; Fryer, I, p. 6; Ovington, p. 129; Broecke, II, Pp. 378-379; PVD, II/3, Pp. 6-7; Mandelslo, Pp. 31-32; Alexander Hamilton estimated the population of Surat toward the end of the century as 200,000, Hamilton, I, p. 89
- 7) Fryer, I, p. 247; EFI, VIII, Pp. 97, note 1, 319.
- 8) Jourdain, p. 129, also Note 4; Mundy, II, p. 29; De Laet, p. 17; Broecke, II, p. 378; Mandelslo, p. 31; Tavernier, I, p. 6; Manucci, I, p. 196; T & C, Pp. 21, 163; Fryer, I, p. 248; Ovington, p. 129; PVD, II/3, Pp. 5, 6.
- 9) Fitch, p. 133; Mundy, II, p. 29; Ovington, p. 130; HOG, II, p. 391.
- 10) Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh, II, Pp. 149-159; Fitch, p. 133; Mundy, II, Pp. 29-30; Mandelslo, p. 31; Broecke, II, p. 378; Tavernier, I, p. 6; T & C, Pp. 22, 163; Fryer, I, Pp. 248-249.
- 11) Fryer, I, p. 248; Ovington, p. 130.
- 12) Mundy, II, p. 29; T & C, p. 23; PVD, II/3, Pp. 6, 7; Ovington, p. 120; Fryer, I, p. 248.
- 13) For caste in Surat see Ovington, p. 165.
- 14) Fryer, I, p. 284; Ovington, Pp. 203-204; Broecke, II, Pp. 323-324.
- 15) Mundy, II, p. 29; Tavernier, p. 6; T & C, Pp. 22-23; Fryer, I, p. 231.
- 16) For the expropriatory propensities of the Mughal officers see Fryer, I, Pp. 246, 302; Ovington, p. 187.
- 17) Mundy, II, p. 34; Della Valle, I, p. 35; T & C, p. 36; For Jain temples see Indudutam, verses, 99-100; Fryer, I, p. 255; K.H. Jhaveri (Ed.), *Suryapurano Suvarnayuga*, Pp. 15 ff.

- 18) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 255-256.
- 19) *Ovington*, p. 177.
- 20) *Ovington*, Pp. 151-152.
- 21) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 252-254.
- 22) *T & C*, Pp. 35-36.
- 23) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 31-32; *Embassy*, p. 112; *Mandelslo*, p. 32; *T & C*, p. 35; *Fryer*, I, p. 261.
- 24) *Best*, Pp. 110-111; H. G. Rawlinson, *British Beginnings*, p. 49; *Embassy*, I, p. 345.
- 25) *Della Valle*, I, p. 22; *Mundy*, II, Pp. 311-313; *EFI*, III, p. 202; V, p. 84; VIII, p. 182.
- 26) *Summa Oriental*, I, p. 34; *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, I, Pp. 145-148 and note 1 on p. 147; *Keeling's Journal*, Pp. 121-124; *EFI*, II, p. 66; VI, Pp. 1, 272, 274; VIII, p. 2; F.C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, I, p. 399.
- 27) *Best*, p. 27; *EFI*, II, Pp. 265, 283, 294; III, p. 279; IV, p. 102; VIII, p. 286; X, p. 316; XI, p. 3; XIII, p. 201.
- 28) *EFI*, I, Pp. 129, 132, 231; III, p. 28; V, p. 184.
- 29) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 39-45.
- 30) See Bhanvarlal Nahta (Ed.), *Samayasundara Rasa Panchaka* (Bikaner, V.S. 2017), *Champakseth Chaupal*, *Dhal* (6), *Idar*, *Amba Ambili Ehani*, verses 1-10.
- 31) *EFI*, IV, Pp. xiii-xxv, 20, 97, 122, 135, 138, 146, 158, 166, 177-178, 180-181, 193, 195, 218, 258; *Generale Missiven*, I, Pp. 288, 317.
- 32) *EFI*, V, Pp. 149, 151, 177.
- 33) *EFI*, VII, p. 202; VIII, Pp. 74, 99, 192-193; X, Pp. 196, 306; XI, Pp. 24, 200, 321, 323.
- 34) *Letters Received*, I, p. 303; *Broecke*, II, p. 258; *Mandelslo*, p. 31.
- 35) For details see *Factory Records*, *Surat Factory*, 97, Pp. 1 ff; 31, 99; p. 131; A. Wright, *Annesley of Surat and His Times* Pp. 159 ff; 198 ff.
- 36) For details see *EFI*, XI, Pp. 297-315; *Manucci*, II, p. 104; *T & C*, Pp. 40-42; J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, Pp. 95 ff; 150; S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, I, Pp. 152-155.
- 37) *William Hedges*, II, Pp. 226-229; Sarkar, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 170 ff.
- 38) *Fryer*, I, p. 249; *Abbé Carre*, I/II, p. 148.

*Notes on Chapter Two*

- 1) S. G. Checkland, "Toward a Definition of Urban History" in H. J. Dyos (Ed.), *The Study of Urban History*, p. 349.
- 2) *Downton*, p. 143.
- 3) *Della Valle*, I, p. 30.
- 4) *Mundy*, II, p. 33; *Mandelslo*, p. 32; *PVD*, II/3, p. 68; *T & C*, Pp. 21-22; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 232-233; *Ovington*, p. 139.
- 5) For details see S. C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*, Pp. 3-14; for the Mahdawi movement see S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Some Aspects of Medieval Gujarat*, Pp. 109-119.
- 6) *Ovington*, Pp. 139-140.
- 7) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 88-89; 234-235.
- 8) *Hamilton*, I, Pp. 89-90; for the *Shakta* Practices see J. Woodroffe, *S'akti and S'kta*, Pp. 384-385.
- 9) *Della Valle*, I, Pp. 43-44.
- 10) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 235-236; *Hamilton*, I, p. 97.
- 11) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 235-239; Thevenot gives a long description of the marriage of the Surat Governor's daughter which must have obviously cost a small fortune; *T & C*, Pp. 31-32.
- 12) *Della Valle*, I, p. 42.
- 13) See *Storia*, II, Pp. 334-335; III, Pp. 196-197.
- 14) *Ovington*, Pp. 152-154; 160-162.
- 15) *Fryer*, II, p. 122; *Ovington*, Pp. 147-149.
- 16) *Ovington*, p. 146.
- 17) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 270-273, 275; *Ovington*, p. 144.
- 18) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 240-241; *Bernier*, Pp. 316 ff.
- 19) S. C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat*, Pp. 25 ff; 70 ff.
- 20) *Fryer*, I, p. 233.
- 21) See for instance *T & C*, p. 22; *Fryer*, I, p. 205; *Abbé Carre'*, I/II, p. 97; *Ovington*, p. 139, *Mandelslo*, p. 32; *PVD*, II/3, p. 8.
- 22) *De Jongh*, Pp. 9 ff; 75.
- 23) *Storia*, II, p. 223.
- 24) *Della Valle*, I, Pp. 88-89.
- 25) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 257, 288; *EFI*, VII, p. 14.

- 26) *Ovington*, Pp. 148, 169, 206.
- 27) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 281-282.
- 28) *Ovington*, p. 169; for tailors also see *EFI*, I, Pp. 10, 85, 108.
- 29) For a description of the *jogis* and their practices see *Fryer*, I, Pp. 257-261.
- 30) For European comments on Jain beliefs and practices see *Remonstrantie*, Pp. 75 ff; *Tavernier*, I, Pp. 77-78; *T & C*, p. 36; *Storia*, I, p. 152; *Ovington*, p. 300.
- 31) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 305-306; *T & C*, p. 22; *De Jongh*, Pp. 108 ff; *Storia*, I, Pp. 62-63; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 294-296; *Ovington*, Pp. 216-222.
- 32) *Storia* I, Pp. 65, 66, 68; II, p. 413; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 88, 245; *Della Valle*, I, p. 26; *Mundy*, II, Pp. 374 ff; *Abbé Carré*, I/II, p. 148; *Ovington*, p. 133.
- 33) *T & C*, p. 22.
- 34) *Storia*, I, p. 151; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 211-212; *Ovington*, p. 163; also see *De Jongh*, Pp. 72 ff. where *De Jongh* calls them "treffelijcke coopluijden de grootie negotie doen"; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 68 ff.
- 35) *Storia*, I, p. 152; *William Hedges*, II, p. 312.
- 36) *Ovington*, Pp. 163 ff, 175.
- 37) *Ovington*, Pp. 172 ff; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 277-278.
- 38) *Ovington*, Pp. 174 ff.
- 39) *Fryer*, I, p. 281; *Ovington*, p. 159; *De Jongh*, Pp. 72-73.
- 40) *Ovington*, p. 168; *Fryer*, I, p. 289.
- 41) See *The Religion of India*, Pp. 150 ff; 199 ff.
- 42) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 246, 302; *Ovington*, p. 187.
- 43) *T & C*, p. 41; *EFI*, XI, p. 308.
- 44) *EFI*, V, p. 265; XI, Pp. 112-113.
- 45) *EFI*, I, Pp. 198, 338, 352; IV, p. 158; VII, Pp. 6, 7, 37; VIII, Pp. 59, 77, 78, 112; XII, p. 5.
- 46) *Ovington*, Pp. 167-168.
- 47) *EFI*, II, p. 93; VII, Pp. 37, 57; *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Pp. 222-223.
- 48) *Letters Received*, I, p. 277; *EFI*, II, Pp. 144, 189.
- 49) For price levels see *Letters Received*, I, p. 141; *EFI*, II, p. 256, IV, p. 209; *De Jongh*, p. 7; *Habib, The Agrarian System*, p. 90.
- 50) *EFI*, III, Pp. vii ff, 27-30.
- 51) See *EFI*, XIII, Pp. 85, 191, 196; this subject is further discussed in a later chapter on the Merchant Community.



- 52) *EFI*, I, Pp. 56, 92; II, p. 304; III, p. vi; IV, p. 326; XIII, p. 191.  
 53) *EFI*, IV, p. 22; V, p. 290.  
 54) *Embassy*, Pp. 409, 467.

*Notes on Chapter Three*

- 1) *Letters Received*, IV, p. 293; *EFI*, III, p. 157; *Storia*, I, Pp. 63, 208.
- 2) *Ain*, II, Pp. 261-262; the *dam* or *paisa* "was a massive copper coin. . . weighing 323.5 grains or very nearly 21 grammes" and 40 *damis* made a rupee. The rupee was equal to 2s. 3d. and the British pound values are based on this equation; see V. A. Smith, *Akbar, The Great Mogul*, Pp. 281-282.
- 3) *Mirat-i-Ahmadi Supplement*, Pp. 187-189; according to P. Saran the Surat *sarkar* comprised 73 mahals, of which 13 were ports, *Provincial Government of the Mughals*, p. 200 (hereafter abbreviated as *PGM.*). I am unable to understand this discrepancy, *Hamilton*, I, p. 89.
- 4) *Mirat-Supplement*, Pp. 187-188; *PGM*, p. 200; *Ovington*, p. 139; *Fryer*, I, p. 249.
- 5) *Storia*, I, Pp. 370-380; *Tavernier*, p. 203; *EFI*, X, Pp. 123-124.
- 6) *Storia*, II, p. 419.
- 7) *Mandelslo*, Pp. 31-32; *T & C*, p. 27; *Ovington*, Pp. 130-131.
- 8) *T & C*, p. 27; *Fryer*, I, p. 242; *Ovington*, p. 136.
- 9) *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 562; II, p. 414; *EFI*, V, p. 151; XI, Pp. 203-204.
- 10) *EFI*, IV, Pp. 62, 68, 347; XI, Pp. 203-204.
- 11) *Keeling's Journal*, p. 110 and Note 179; *EFI*, III, p. 113; V, p. 262; VII, p. 24; VIII, Pp. 334-335.
- 12) *Letters Received*, V, p. 335; *EFI*, II, p. 263; VIII, Pp. xii, 319; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 284; *Forrest, Selections*, I, p. 67; for farming out see *EFI*, I, p. xxiv; VI, p. 193; VI, Pp. 100, 123, 207, 279; VII, Pp. 23-25.
- 13) *Letters Received*, V, p. 80; *Broecke*, II, Pp. 332, 341; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 622; *EFI*, p. 147; III, p. 271; IV, Pp. 96, 179, 209, 216; V, p. 68; VII, p. 2; VIII, p. 282; X, p. 330.
- 14) Among Governors dismissed for corruption were Masih-us-Zamani, Mustafa Khan, Ghiyas-ud-din Khan and Kartalb Khan, *EFI*, V, Pp. xv, 311; VI, p. xii; X, p. 330; XI, Pp. 12-13; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 284; *Masir-i-Alamgiri*, P. 151; *Forrest, Selections*, I, Pp. 192-193, 205; *Abbe' Carre'*, I/II, p. 148.
- 15) *EFI*, II, p. 274; IV, Pp. 148, 194, 376; VI, Pp. 105, 208; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 190; *PVD*, III/2, p. 12; for instances of European conflicts see the chapter on European Traders.

- 16) Patel, *Suratni Tawarikh*, p. 39; *EFI*, XI, p. 173.
- 17) William Hedges, II, Pp. ccxxvii ff; *EFI*, XI, Pp. 307 ff.
- 18) *Generale Missiven*, II, p. 744; *Storia*, II, Pp. 41-42.
- 19) For Maratha incursions in the area see *Storia*, IV, p. 232; for religious and political policies see IV, p. 57; also *Generale Missiven*, III, p. 271; also see Forrest, *Selections*, I, Pp. 248-251.
- 20) This account is based on the author's paper: "Muiz-ul-Mulk: Governor of Surat" published in *JIH*, XLIV/1 (April 1966), Pp. 55-56 which gives detailed documentation. Also see *EFI*, IV, p. 88; V, Pp. xii, xv, 61, 62, 81, 83, 151, 199, 244, 322; VI, Pp. xvi, 123, 207; *Generale Missiven*, I, Pp. 286, 527, 528, 562.; II, Pp. 43-45, 802; IV, p. 16.
- 21) *Mirat Supplement*, Pp. 187-188; *PGM*, Pp. 200-201; *T & C*, Pp. 26 ff; *Fryer*, Pp. i, 246 ff; *Ovington*, Pp. 136 ff.
- 22) *Broecke*, I, p. 111; II, Pp. 327, 340, 344; *Opkomst*, Pp. 61, 179, 213; *Letters Received*, IV, p. 324; *EFI*, I, Pp. 89, 101, 123, 148; *Abbé Carré*, III, p. 768 and Note 1.
- 23) *Embassy*, Pp. 47 ff; *Tavernier*, I, p. 7; *Mandelslo*, Pp. 31-32. *Storia*, II, Pp. 448-449.
- 24) *Fryer*, I, Pp. 247-248; instances of corrupt practices on the part of the customs-officers have already been given earlier in this work. For over-rating of goods to extract money see *Letters Received*, III, p. 5.
- 25) *Tavernier*, Pp. 7 ff; *Broecke*, II, p. 345; *Ovington*, p. 132.
- 26) J.N. Sarkar, *Short History of Aurangzib*, p. 150; S. R. Sharma, *Mughal Government and Administration*, Pp. 61, 62; *Broecke*, II, p. 345.
- 27) *EFI*, I, Pp. 36 and Note 5, 91 and Note 2, 218; VIII, P. 6; *Storia*, II, p. 392; Commissariat, *HOG*, II, p. 164; for Mughal currency see A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar, The Great*, II, Pp. 204-209; Habib, *Agrarian System*, Pp. 380-394; D. Pant, *The Commercial Policy of the Moguls*, p. 189; *Fryer*, I, p. 248. The irregular working of the Mint was a normal feature of this institution; in 1700 the English complained that the Mint was inactive for "some months" and money was scarce in Surat, *IOR/G/36/99*, p. 95.
- 28) *T & C*, p. 27; *Fryer*, I, p. 246; *Ovington*, p. 137.
- 29) *Storia*, II, Pp. 395-396; *Fryer*, I, p. 82; *Ovington*, p. 223.
- 30) *Ain*, II, Pp. 43-45; J.N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, Pp. 57-61; S.R. Sharma, *Mughal Government and Administration*, Pp. 221-222; S. P. Sangar, *Crime and Punishment in Mughal India*, p. 15.
- 31) *T & C*, p. 26; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 232, 237; *Ovington*, Pp. 137-138. The Qazi's fanaticism often created tensions; the incident of Banias emigrating *en masse*

has already been referred to. An English letter of 1700 mentions the Qazi objecting to the display of icons in the Armenian Church in Surat which caused trouble between Armenians and the Surat government, *IOR/G/36/99*, p. 68.

32) *Fryer*, I, p. 244; *Broecke*, II, Pp. 274-275; 323-324.

33) *Storia*, I, Pp. 190-191; II, Pp. 394-395; IV, p. 215; J. N. Sarkar, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 22-23; S. R. Sharma, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 199 ff; S.P. Sangar, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 16-20.

34) *T & C*, p. 29; *Ovington*, p. 139; *Storia*, II, Pp. 418, 419.

35) J. N. Sarkar, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 61-62; *Ovington*, p. 137; *PGM*, Pp. 182-184; *Storia*, II, Pp. 308-309.

36) S. R. Sharma, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 67-68; also see J. N. Sarkar, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 77-90; *PGM*, Pp. 264-270.

37) For duties of these officers see S. R. Sharma, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 182 ff; J. N. Sarkar, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 140 ff; *PGM*, Pp. 65, 158 ff; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 233 ff, 255.

38) In the year 1677-78 Aurangzeb gave a large amount of money to an Islamic theological institution in Surat, see S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Some Aspects of Medieval Gujarat*, p. 101.

#### *Notes on Chapter Four*

1) *Letters Received*, I, p. 305; *Fryer*, III, Pp. 156-159; *Downton*, p. 137; *Best*, p. p. 256; *Broecke*, II, p. 380; *PVD*, II/3 Pp. 7, 8; *Opkomst*, Pp. 204-205; for references in Buddhist literature see G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, II, p. p. 365; W. H. S. Schoff (Ed.), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, Pp. 41-42; *Ain*, II, p. 250. For a detailed description of Broach in the 1630s see *De Jongh*, Pp. 1-7.

2) *Mandelslo*, Pp. 37 ff; also see *De Laet*, p. 24.

3) For details see B. G. Gokhale, "Broach and Baroda" in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, 43-44, (NS), Pp. 142 ff.

4) *Letters Received*, II, Pp. 33, 54; *EFI*, I, Pp. 1, 135; V, p. 293; VII, p. 204; I, (NS), p. 255; *Broecke*, II, p. 267; *PVD*, II/3, p. 7.

5) *EFI*, VII, p. 72; VIII, p. 276; *PVD*, II/3, p. 7; *Letters Received*, II, p. 228; VI, p. 215; *Opkomst*, p. 205 *De Jongh*. Pp. 9, 31, 23.

6) *Downton*, Pp. 138-139; *EFI*, I, Pp. 27, 85, 200, 323; XII, Pp. 12, 147; XIII, Pp. 27, 196; also see the author's paper cited. For Dutch activities in Broach and Baroda see *Generale Missiven* I, Pp. 347, 527, 528, 618; II, Pp. 412, 548, 627, 730, 798, 800; III, Pp. 73, 105, 274, 333, 334, 504; IV, Pp. 151, 580, 671, 825.

7) *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, *Supplement*, Pp. 1, 2; S. C. Sharma, *The Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat*, p. 220; *Ain-I-Akbari*, II, Pp. 247, 248, 258, 262; much of the material here has been summarized from the author's paper on "Ahmadabad in the XVIIth Century" published in the *Journal of the Economic and Social History*

of the Orient, XII/2 (1969), Pp. 187-197 which has complete documentation. Only additional documentation is cited here. For an interesting description of Ahmadabad in the 1630s see *De Jongh*, Pp. 36 ff.

8) *De Laet*, Pp. 19-20; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 9-10.

9) For Dutch commercial activities in Ahmadabad see *Generale Missiven*, I, Pp. 619 ff; II, Pp. 413 ff.

10) The material presented here has been summarized from the author's paper on "Burhanpur" published in the *JESHO*, XV, Pp. 316-323; complete documentation has been given in that paper and only additional documentation will be cited here.

11) *Summa Oriental*, I, Pp. 35-36; *Duarte Barbosa*, I, Pp. 139-142; *Voyage*, I, Pp. 59-62.

12) *Journal*, p. 173.

13) *Della Valle*, I, Pp. 66 ff.

14) *Mandelslo*, Pp. 57 ff.

15) *De Laet*, p. 19; also see *Broecke*, II, p. 270; *PVD*, II/3, p. 14.

16) *Broecke*, II, p. 379; *EFI*, II, p. 211; *Ain*, II, p. 262.

17) *EFI*, I, Pp. 89, 92, 96, 106; III, p. 209; V, Pp. 118, 164; VI, Pp. 192, 278, 300; VII, p. 164; VIII, p. 33; *Opkomst*, p. 204.

18) *Opkomst*, p. 78; *EFI*, I, p. 119; II, Pp. 212, 310; V, p. 136.

19) *Abbé Carré*, III, p. 767; *Broecke*, I, p. 136.

20) *Voyage*, I, p. 63; *Mundy*, V, p. 50; *EFI*, I, Pp. 37, 83; V, Pp. 103, 136, 137.

21) *Duarte Barbosa*, I, Pp. 158-160; Rawlinson, *British Beginnings*, p. 13; *EFI*, I, Pp. 281, 306.

22) *Summa Oriental*, I, Pp. 52-53; *Duarte Barbosa*, I, Pp. 164-166.

23) *Journal*, Pp. 197-198.

24) *Embassy*, II, Pp. 398-399; *EFI*, I, Pp. 19-20, 96, 108, 111, 139, 158, 165, 184, 233, 252, 289; III, Pp. 62, 64, 158, 214; V, Pp. 167, 193, 195, 211, 212, 282, 291-292; X, Pp. 352-354; XI, Pp. 230, 234; *Best*, p. 163; *T & C*, p. 185.

25) *Mundy*, III, p. 471; for an account of Dutch activities in Wengurla see *PVD*, II/2, Pp. 436-439.

26) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 39-66; *Journal*, p. 143, and note 4; for short-hauls see *EFI*, II, p. 231; IV, p. 23.

27) *Journal*, p. 144 and note 1.

28) *Mundy*, II, p. 48; *Journal*, p. 144 and note 5.

29) *Mundy*, II, p. 49.

- 30) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 56-63; *Journal*, p. 153.
- 31) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 225 ff.
- 32) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 95-96 and note 1 on page 95; also see *EFI*, V, p. 225.
- 33) *Ain*, I, Pp. 152, 158; *Mundy*, II, Pp. 58-59, 114-115; *EFI*, I, Pp. 90, 93, 269; II, p. 261; III, Pp. 112, 271, 272, 273, 307; IV, Pp. 63, 91, 132, 142; VIII, p. 156; for the *Adhwaya* see *Mirat*, p. 232; *EFI*, IV, p. 95; V, p. 172.
- 34) *EFI*, I, p. 230; III, p. 61; IV, Pp. 215, 265; VI, Pp. 38, 211, 301, 310; VII, p. 20; VIII, Pp. 114, 335; IX, Pp. 26, 52.
- 35) *Letters Received*, VI, p. 196; *EFI*, II, Pp. 213, 235; V, Pp. 61, 183; VI, Pp. 2-3; VII, p. 163; VIII, p. 129; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 192, 208.
- 36) *EFI*, I, Pp. 74, 84, 97; II, p. 222; IV, p. 96; VIII, p. 88.
- 37) The *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 7; *Masir-i-Alamgiri*, p. 16; *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Pp. 232-235.
- 38) *EFI*, I, p. 89; IV, p. 132; XII, p. 2.
- 39) For references to Indian shipping see *EFI*, IV, p. 101 and Note 1; VI, p. 140; X, Pp. 157, 305; XI, p. 191; XII, p. 17 and Note 1; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 222-224; *Fryer*, I, p. 267.
- 40) *EFI*, V, p. 149; VI, Pp. 209, 211; VII, p. 141; VIII, Pp. 90-91; X, p. 8; XI, p. 24; XII, p. 8.
- 41) *EFI*, V, Pp. 137-138, 177; VI, p. 227; VII, Pp. 93, 248 and Note 1.
- 42) *Keeling's Journal*, Pp. 109, 128, 175; *EFI*, I, p. 11; III, Pp. 72, 138; IV, Pp. 202, 284, 299; V, Pp. 3, 62; VII, p. 62; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 211; M. N. Pearson, "Wealth and Power; Indian Groups; The Portuguese Indian Economy" in *South Asia*, 3 (August, 1973), Pp. 36-44; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 280.

#### Notes on Chapter Five

- 1) *Ovington*, p. 251; *Embassy*, Pp. 345, 409.
- 2) *EFI*, I, p. 17; *Letters Received*, IV, p. 251.
- 3) Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 60; *Embassy*, p. 528.
- 4) *Fryer*, I, p. 302.
- 5) *Ovington*, p. 131; *T & C*, p. 163.
- 6) *Downton*, p. 134; for the mercantile community see chapters on Merchants of Surat and Virji Vora.
- 7) *EFI*, IV, Pp. 123, 129; V, p. 59; VI, p. 235; VII, Pp. 177 ff; IX, Pp. 29, 58, 61; X, p. 118, XIII, Pp. 2, 197-198; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 236-237; 248, 267, 282; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 141.

- 8) *Commercial Relations*, Pp. 298-300.
- 9) *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 204-228.
- 10) For details of the state of affairs with the French in Surat see *Abbé Carre*, I, Pp. 142 ff.
- 11) *Ovington*, Pp. 261, 262, 268.
- 12) *Embassy*, p. 348.
- 13) See *EFI*, I, p. 130; V, p. 69; VII, p. 139; VIII, Pp. 14, 87, 88, 89; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 292.
- 14) *EFI*, II, p. 153; IV, Pp. 210-211.
- 15) *EFI*, I, Pp. 100-101, 126-127, 134-135; also see B. G. Gokhale, "Some Aspects of Early English Trade with Western India (1600-1650)", *Journal of Indian History*, XL/2 (August, 1962), Pp. 277-280.
- 16) For English trade in this area see *Letters Received*, I, p. 307; V, p. 289; *EFI*, I, Pp. 81, 185; II, p. 183; IV, Pp. 103, 127, 194; V, p. 187, VII, Pp. 84, 91, 146, 208, 248; VIII, Pp. 14, 114; IX, p. 109; X, p. 158.
- 17) *Letters Received*, I, Pp. 72-75, 257; IV, p. 92; *EFI*, III, Pp. 200, 223; IV, Pp. 6, 146, 193, 195, 245; V, Pp. 13, 35, 111, 114, 179, 207, 212, 228; VI, p. 141; VII, Pp. 34, 86, 99, 248; VIII, Pp. 85, 181, 244; IX, Pp. 94, 222; X, p. 158; XI, Pp. 96, 195.
- 18) For the English transactions between Surat and Southeast Asia see *EFI*, V, p. 147; VII, Pp. 35, 93, 165, 211, 252; VIII, Pp. 80 and Note 1, 137; for the Dutch trade see *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 674; II, Pp. 40, 202, 224, 264, 273, 290, 315, 323, 336, 443, 507, 547, 565, 567, 573, 730, 751; III, Pp. 18, 36, 80, 82, 120, 170, 228, 271, 280, 385, 435, 495, 567, 567, 573, 596, 605, 665, 722, 785; IV, Pp. 5, 23, 89, 151, 296, 724, 738, 824.
- 19) *EFI*, I, Pp. 131, 175.
- 20) *EFI*, VII, p. 37; XII, p. 5; *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Pp. 232-233.
- 21) *EFI*, I, p. 339; III, p. 209; VIII, p. 78.
- 22) *EFI*, XII, p. 2.
- 23) *Letters Received*, IV, p. 239; *EFI*, I, p. 52; IV, p. 8; VII, p. 123; J. Irwin and P. R. Schwartz, *Studies in Indo-European Textile History*, p. 59 (hereafter abbreviated as *Studies*).
- 24) *EFI*, I, Pp. 24 and Note 2, 76, 78, 94, 101, 179, 213; II, Pp. 110, 188; III, 11-12, 62, 209; IV, Pp. 8, 217; VI, p. 277; VIII, Pp. 187, 200-201; XII, Pp. 2, 5; XIII, Pp. 6, 19; *Letters Received*, II, p. 259; *Studies*, Pp. 57 ff; also see B. G. Gokhale, "English Trade with Western India", *JIH*, XLII/2 (August 1964), Pp. 329, 342.



- 25) *EFI*, I, Pp. 46, 161, 174, 213; II, Pp. 157, 185; III, Pp. 55, 64, 209, 230, 239, 245; IV, Pp. 9, 22; V, Pp. 66, 195, 198, 272, 297; VII, Pp. 124, 136, 164, 197, 223; VIII, Pp. 7, 33; XIII, p. 198.
- 26) *EFI*, III, p. 93; IV, p. 111; V, p. xiii; X, p. 163; Mukerji, *Economic History of India*, Pp. IV-V, 150, 162-163; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, Pp. 139-140.
- 27) See for instance *EFI*, I, p. 52; VIII, p. 139 for Dutch competition; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 205-211; also see Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, p. 146; in 1697 the Dutch bought in Surat textiles worth over £40,825, p. 144.
- 28) *Commercial Relations*, p. 140.
- 29) *EFI*, III, p. 334; IV, p. 20.
- 30) *Letters Received*, IV, p. 241; *Mundy*, II, Pp. 222-223; Pieter Van Dam gives a detailed description of the process of the manufacture of indigo for which see *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 75-83.
- 31) *Letters Received*, II, p. 249; V, Pp. 81 and Note 1, 82; *EFI*, I, p. 60; III, p. 63; IV, p. 324; V, Pp. 70-71, 138, 292; VI, p. 225; VII, p. 202; VIII, Pp. 31, 33, 189; *De Jongh*, p. 8.
- 32) *Letters Received*, II, p. 253; *PVD*, II/3, p. 7; *EFI*, V, p. 149.
- 33) Downton, *Voyage*, p. 111; *Ain*, II, p. 248; *Letters Received*, I, p. 306; II, Pp. Pp. 152, 193, 214, 231, 238, 241, 248, 260; III, p. 32; *EFI*, I, p. 60 and Note 1; II, Pp. 162, 181, 219, 226, 329, 331; III, Pp. 208, 230, 232, 275; IV, Pp. vi, 61; V, Pp. 73, 292; VII, Pp. 163-164; *Opkomst*, p. 219; also see *De Jongh*, Pp. 46-48.
- 34) *EFI*, IV, Pp. 105, 125, 255; VI, p. 232; VII, Pp. 5, 136, 202; VIII, Pp. 31, 77, 160; XIII, p. 3; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 619; II, Pp. 66, 336.
- 35) Bernier, *Travels*, p. 292; Habib, *The Agrarian System*, p. 43; *Letters Received*, IV, p. 239; *EFI*, III, Pp. 228, 326, 335; IV, Pp. 131, 325; V, Pp. 70, 112, 138, 141; VI, Pp. 192, 196; VII, Pp. 84, 254; VIII, Pp. 33, 62, 77, 114, 122, 202, 219, 276; IX, Pp. 9, 50, 51, 221; XI, p. 199; XII, Pp. 164, 165; XIII, p. 6; *Generale Missiven*, II, p. 66.
- 36) *EFI*, I, Pp. 47, 86; II, Pp. 67, 166, 185; V, p. 70; VI, p. 91; VII, p. 95; VIII, p. 1; IX, p. 56; XI, p. 320; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 18; *Coen*, I, Pp. 486, 499; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 107; II, p. 413; *Broecke*, II, Pp. 293, 332; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 9-10, 211-212.
- 37) *EFI*, VIII, Pp. 76, 179, 276; X, Pp. 322, 336; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, Pp. 155-157; Habib, *The Agrarian System*, p. 86.
- 38) *EFI*, I, Pp. 58, 70-73, 76; II, Pp. 26, 28, 43, 165, 182; III, Pp. 62, 90, 93, 321, 329-330; XII, p. 3; *Broecke*, II, Pp. 322, 330, 332, 334; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 524, II, p. 591; III, Pp. 103, 273, 746; IV, Pp. 73, 357, 579, 825; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 25-33, 127 ff; Pp. 229-233; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 82; Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, Pp. 84, 85, 104-105, 301-302.

- 39) *Letters Received*, III, Pp. 32, 41; *EFI*, I, Pp. 10, 55, 114, 141, 169; III, Pp. 213, 291, 326; IV, Pp. 25, 62, 69, 139, 161, 198; V, Pp. 134, 181, 291; VIII, Pp. 83, 182; IX, Pp. 88, 109; *Ain*, I, p. 80.
- 40) *EFI*, I, Pp. 51, 58, 63, 102, 120, 121; II, Pp. 109, 153, 167, 224, 218, 254, 256, 257, 261; III, Pp. 12, 50, 63, 77, 212, 221, 329; IV, Pp. 22, 26, 52, 61, 62, 70, 74, 91, 95, 165, 177, 196, 209, 215, 288; V, Pp. 101, 166, 177, 189; VI, Pp. 192, 198, 203; VIII, Pp. 57, 62; IX, Pp. 36, 52, 71, 122, 152; Habib, *Agrarian Relations*, Pp. 84-85; the Dutch sold Bengal sugar in the Surat markets for some time before they began to push the sales of their own java sugar which then affected the connection between the sugar markets of Surat and Bengal, see Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, Pp. 152, 160, 165, 263-264.
- 41) *EFI*, I, Pp. 84, 104, 161; III, Pp. 230, 247; IV, P. 215; V, Pp. 146, 206; VI, p. 192; XII, p. 6; De Jongh states that Sindkhera could produce between 25,000 to 35,000 lbs. of gumlac annually, *De Jongh*, Pp. 26 ff.
- 42) *EFI*, IV, Pp. 196, 209.
- 43) For details of the history of tobacco in the seventeenth century see B. G. Gokhale, "Tobacco in Seventeenth-Century India" in *Agricultural History*, XL-VIII/4 (October, 1974). Pp. 484-492.
- 44) *Ain*, p. 23; David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, p. 81; for the Dutch import of metals see *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 128, 229-233.
- 45) *Bemier*, p. 203; *EFI*, V, Pp. 101, 104, 120, 165; XII, p. 2.
- 46) *EFI*, V, Pp. 101, 148; X, p. 306; XI, Pp. 110, 113, 210; XII, Pp. 2, 31; XIII, p. 24; for Dutch sales of Japanese copper in Surat see Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, Pp. 173, 175.
- 47) *Letters Received*, III, Pp. 9, 18; *EFI*, I, Pp. 54-55; II, p. 86; V, p. 207; XI, Pp. 110, 211; XIII, p. 25.
- 48) Ogg, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 79-80; *Letters Received*, I, p. 235; III, p. 9; IV, Pp. 296, 336-337; V, p. 54; *EFI*, I, Pp. 11, 54, 106; II, p. 70; III, Pp. 64, 196, 326, 334; IV, Pp. 32, 129; V, Pp. 7, 69, 134, 205, 218; VI, Pp. 204, 288; VII, p. 145; VIII, Pp. 71, 84, 105, 206, 282; IX, p. 140; X, p. 199; X, p. 157; XI, Pp. 111, 113, 198, 210; XIII, p. 190; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 230, 283.
- 49) For the iron and steel manufacture see N. S. Gupta, *Industrial Structure of India*, Pp. 106-109; *Letters Received*, I, Pp. 271, 299; *EFI*, I, Pp. 54, 65, 76, 88, 116.
- 50) *Bemier*, Pp. 224-226; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 282-283.
- 51) *EFI*, I, p. 57; III, Pp. 213, 221, 235, 295, 326; V, Pp. 121, 225; VIII, p. 7; IX, p. 141; X, Pp. 141, 306; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 267-268, 282-283.
- 52) For import of ingots and currency see *EFI*, V, p. 68; VII, p. 252; VIII, Pp. 84, 249, 289; IX, p. 71; XI, p. 202; XIII, p. 190; *Downton*, p. xii, Note 2.

53) *EFI*, II, p. 186; VII, Pp. 144, 145, 175-176, 209; VIII, Pp. 83, 185, 243, 281; IX, p. 140; X, p. 74; XIII, p. 189 and Note 1; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 14.

54) For various currencies, values and exchange rates see *Letters Received*, I, p. 34; II, p. 152; III, p. 33; V, p. 92; *EFI*, I, Pp. 8, 102, 104, 113, 155, 187; II, Pp. 115, 124, 160, 163; III, Pp. 33 and Note 1, 156, 221, 236, 238, 326; IV, p. 11; V, Pp. 68, 69, 225; VI, Pp. 195, 287; VII, Pp. 17, 210; VIII, Pp. 12, 86, 187; IX, Pp. 32, 87-88, 93, 105, 140; X, Pp. 149, 164; *Broecke*, I, p. 110; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 620; *Keeling's Journal*, p. 112, Note 188; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, Pp. 56-59; Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 331; Habib, *Agrarian System*, Pp. 383-384.

55) See Lipton, *The Economic History of England*, II, p. 277; Mukerji, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 29, 34; Habib, *Agrarian System*, Pp. 386-387, 392; *EFI*, XIII, p. 197.

56) *EFI*, I, Pp. 52, 54; II, p. 38; III, Pp. 62, 64, 211, 326, 334; IV, Pp. 21, 32, 89, 298.

57) *Letters Received*, I, Pp. 301, 307; V, p. 108; VI, p. 160; *EFI*, I, Pp. xvii, xxxv, 54, 131, 136, 1337, 175, 187; II, Pp. 205-206; III, p. 150; IV, Pp. 31, 32, 304; V, p. 69; VI, p. 208; VII, p. 174; VIII, Pp. 93, 281; IX, Pp. 84, 85, 140; X, p. 211; XI, Pp. 111, 193, 210; XII, Pp. 3, 31; XIII, p. 14; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, Pp. 112-114.

58) *Letters Received*, I, Pp. 238, 305; II, Pp. 181, 260, 263; III, p. 9; IV, p. 296; V, Pp. 106-107; VI, Pp. 160 and Note 1, 161; *EFI*, I, p. 55; II, p. 158; III, Pp. 64, 92, 156, 245, 299, 325, 334; IV, Pp. 5, 32, 89, 180, 194, 206, 213, 275, 298; V, Pp. 23, 82, 143; VIII, Pp. 188, 249-250, 282; IX, Pp. 31, 84, 112, 121, 252; X, p. 199; XI, Pp. 111, 210; XII, Pp. 3, 31; XIII, Pp. 13, 15, 24; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 341; II, p. 336; *Ain*, I, p. 24; Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 164.

59) *Ain*, I, p. 21; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 100; *Peter Mundy*, II, Pp. 75-77; *PVD*, II/3, p. 50; *Broecke*, II, Pp. 320, 330; *Generale Missiven*, II, p. 51; *EFI*, II, Pp. 90, 209, 215, 239, 275; VII, Pp. 164, 205, 256; VIII, Pp. 14, 34, 112, 127, 186, 187, 299; IX, Pp. 29, 36, 71, 72, 196; X, Pp. 15, 18, 153, 163, 308; XI, Pp. 85, 187, 327; XII, Pp. 6, 28.

60) *Letters Received*, II, p. 218; III, Pp. 33, 41; V, p. 105; VI, p. 159; *EFI*, I, Pp. 78, 134; III, p. 156; IV, p. 132; VII, p. 211; VIII, p. 8; IX, Pp. 71, 140; XI, Pp. 192, 211; XII, Pp. 3, 31; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 115.

61) *Keeling's Journal*, p. 125; *EFI*, I, Pp. 12, 55, 106, 123, 164; VIII, p. 14.

62) A. Das Gupta, "The Merchants of Surat 1700-50", E. Leach and S. N. Mukherjee (Eds.), *Elites In South Asia*, Pp. 201-222.

63) Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, Pp. 63-64, 126-129, 139-141; Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Pp. 131-132.

*Notes on Chapter Six*

- 1) *The Economic History of India*, p. 83.
- 2) *De Jongh*, Pp. 72-73.
- 3) *Hamilton*, I, p. 90.
- 4) *EFI*, I, Pp. 88, 113, 121; III, p. 202, Note I; IV, p. 94; V, Pp. 23, 84, 85; VI, Pp. 108, 225; VIII, Pp. 113, 225.
- 5) *EFI*, I, Pp. 51-52, 98, 107; IV, Pp. 205, 270-271; VIII, Pp. 182, 276; IX, p. 80; XI, Pp. 20, 122-123; XII, p. 20.
- 6) *EFI*, VIII, p. 276; XI, p. 113; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 152-153.
- 7) *Letters Received*, I, Pp. 26, 227, 234; II, p. 142; VI, p. 232; *EFI*, II, Pp. 280, 281; III, Pp. 90, 173; IV, Pp. 28, 90, 142, 155, 160, 214, 275; V, p. 131; *FX*, p. 90; *Journal*, p. 178, Note; *Best*, p. 27; *Embassy*, Pp. 221 *et seq.*
- 8) *Letters Received*, I, p. 24; *EFI*, II, Pp. 150, 161, 168; IV, p. 248; V, Pp. 24, 55, 58, 132, 169, 218, 226, 232, 236, 240; VI, p. 54; VII, Pp. 15, 21, 61, 204; X, p. 371.
- 9) *EFI*, V, Pp. 183-184, 287; VI, Pp. 72, 164, 183, 204, 301; VII, p. 210; VIII, p. 36; XI, Pp. 42, 100-107; IX, Pp. 117-118, 119, 142, 150; XI, Pp. 89-90, 117, 122, 318; XII, Pp. 7-8, 24, 150, 151, 168; XIII, Pp. 21, 32.
- 10) *EFI*, X, p. 367; XIII, Pp. 85, 191; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 85 ff, 191 ff, 196, 219, 233, 236, 274, 282, 285, 288; Surat consultations of December 9, 1669; August 19, 1672; February 26, 1717/1718, and *IOR/G/36/9*.
- 11) *EFI*, IV, Pp. 328-329; V, p. 85; XI, Pp. 98, 111, 113, 115; XII, Pp. 21, 33, 208.
- 12) *EFI*, II, Pp. 292, 297; III, Pp. 86, 190; IV, Pp. 63, 114, 116, 185-187, 208, 220; V, Pp. 85, 167, 172, 265, 300; VIII, Pp. 104, 276; IX, p. 107; X, Pp. 17, 313, 361, 369, 386; XI, Pp. 24, 27, 90, 98, 100, 113, 212; XII, Pp. 14, 21, 53; XIII, Pp. 33, 189; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 190; *Surat Consultation of March 31, 1670*.
- 13) *EFI*, VII, Pp. 57, 252; VIII, Pp. 15, 54, 136, 252, 289; IX, Pp. 37, 41, 46, 61, 108, 119, 142, 173; X, Pp. 83, 239, 348, 368; XI, Pp. 20, 170; XII, p. 95; XIII, Pp. 59, 259, 267.
- 14) *EFI*, II, Pp. 290, 295; IV, p. 91; V, Pp. 37, 115, 138, 172, 182, 194, 248, 281, 290, 298.
- 15) For names and activities of these persons see *Letters Received*, IV, Pp. 261, 284; *EFI*, I, Pp. 289, 329; II, Pp. 19, 108, 161, 184, 211, 234; IV, Pp. 55, 175; V, Pp. 117, 167, 175, 257, 285, 292; VI, p. 310; VII, Pp. 161, 168, 169, 211; VIII, Pp. 17, 110, 153, 172, 200, 209, 216, 223, 236, 237, 251-252, 288, 324; IX, Pp. 72, 188, 228; X, Pp. 75, 82, 108, 356, 357, 364, 372-375, 381; XI, Pp. 75,

- 107, 120, 188, 232, 258, 342; XII, Pp. 75, 102, 202, 214; XIII, Pp. 105-107; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 131, 183, 328.
- 16) *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 11, 127-133.
- 17) *Best*, p. 30; W. Foster (Ed.), *Early Travels In India*, p. 296; *EFI*, I, p. 296; II, Pp. 212, 242, 331; IV, Pp. 83, 91, 95, 116, 117; VIII, p. 31.
- 18) *EFI*, III, Pp. 212, 330; IV, Pp. 88, 92; V, p. 255; VII, Pp. 144, 169; VIII, p. 111; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 222, 225.
- 19) *EFI*, III, p. 330; V, p. 301; VII, Pp. 161, 257, 274, 294; VIII, p. 169; XI, p. 313; XII, p. 148; XIII, Pp. 24, 184; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 195. For usury see Irfan Habib, "Usury in Medieval India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, VI/4 (July, 1964), Pp. 393-419. For merchant shipping see A. J. Quisar, "Merchant Shipping in India during the Seventeenth Century", *Medieval India-A Miscellany*, (New York, 1972), II, Pp. 195-220; in 1672 Mirza Ma'sum had become "principal merchant" of Surat, see *Surat Consultations*, June 3, 1672.
- 20) *EFI*, XI, p. 207; XII, Pp. 61, 70; XIII, Pp. 184, 195, 204; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 192, 209, 226, 227, 231, 233, 269, 270, 284; *Surat Consultations*, April 17, 1670.
- 21) For details of Abdul Gafur's career see Commissariat, *HOG*, II, p. 391; H. H. Das, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, Pp. 36, 62, 205, 249; *Hamilton*, I, Pp. 89-90, 234; *Selections*, I, Pp. xxiii ff, 231 ff; *Storia*, III, p. 292; IV, Pp. 133 ff; A. Wright, *Annesley of Surat and His Times*, Pp. 110, 160, 191, 337; A. Das Gupta, "The Merchants of Surat, 1700-50", in E. Leach and S. N. Mukherjee (Eds.), *Elites in South Asia*, Pp. 208-209; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 221; *IOR/G/36-99*, p. 53; *G/36-99A*, Pp. 320-329; II, p. 53.
- 22) For details of his career see P. Pissurlencar, *Portuguese Records on Rustamji Manockji*, Pp. xix-xxxiv; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 211; H. Das, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 210; Commissariat, *HOG*, II, p. 391; for Parsi ship-builders in Surat see, R. A. Wadia, *The Bombay Dockyard and the Wadia Masterbuilders*, Pp. 22-24; also see A. Das Gupta, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 212-213.
- 23) *EFI*, III, p. 215; V, Pp. 196, Note 1, 259; VI, p. 225; for a Dutch description of Ahmadabad, its governor and temples see *Mandelslo*, Pp. 41-56; Commissariat, II, Pp. 101-102, *HOG*, II Pp. 101-102.
- 24) *EFI*, IV, p. 94; V, Pp. 23, 85; VI, Pp. 108, 225; VIII, p. 125.
- 25) *EFI*, III, p. 202, Note 1; V, p. 84.
- 26) *EFI*, I, Pp. 88, 113, 121; VIII, p. 113.
- 27) *EFI*, I, p. 194; III, p. 92; V, Pp. 254-265; IX, p. 112; XII, p. 5.
- 28) *Letters Received*, V, Pp. 86-87; *EFI*, III, Pp. iii, 306; V, p. 35; VII, p. 303; VIII, p. 316; IX, Pp. 86, 105, 110; X, p. 199.
- 29) *EFI*, VIII, Pp. 6, 83, 226, 243, 249, 281, 316, 329; X, p. 306; XI, p. 202.



- 30) *Letters Received*, II, p. 250; III, p. 65; *EFI*, I, Pp. 146, 155, 236; II, Pp. 40, 68, 98, 219; IV, Pp. 68, 96; V, Pp. 70, 154, 172; VII, p. 302; VIII, Pp. 17, 36, 102, 103, 308; X, Pp. 18-19.
- 31) *EFI*, VII, Pp. 92, 161; VII, p. 259; IX, Pp. 177, 224; X, p. 15; XI, p. 86; XIII, p. 190; *EFI (NS)*, Pp. 192, 222.
- 32) The *Indudutam* of Shri Vinayavijayagani with a commentary by Muni Dhurandharavijaya (Shri Jainsahityavardhaka Sabha, Sirpur, West Khadesh, 1946), Verses 85-123; also see Dr. Bhogilal Sandesara, "Upadhyaya Vinayavijayakrita 'Induduta' manu Suratnu Varnana" in *Gujaratamita, ane Gujaratadarapana*, Diwali issue, 1954, Pp. 51-52.
- 33) See Buddhisagarasuri, *Jain Dhatu Pratima Lekha Samgraha*, (Bombay, Shri Adhyatmadnyanaprasarka Mandala, V. S. 1973), I, Pp. 103 ff.
- 34) Bhanvarlal Nahta (Ed.), *Samayasundara Rasa Panchaka*, (Bikaner, Sadula Rajasthani Research Institute, Bikaner, V. S. 2017), *Champaketh Chaupal, Dhal (6) Idar, Amba Ambili Ehani*, verses 1-9; also see Kesharichand Hirachand Jhaveri, *Suryapurano Suvarnayuga* (Surat, 1939), Pt. II, Pp. 175 ff.
- 35) *Letters Received*, I, Pp. 30, 269; V, p. 75; *EFI*, I, p. 183.
- 36) *EFI*, I, Pp. 56, 137.
- 37) *EFI*, XI, p. 201.
- 38) *Letters Received*, IV, p. 351; *EFI*, V, p. 171; XI, p. 77; *Commissarriatt*, *Op. Cit.*, II, p. 135; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 235.
- 39) *Letters Received*, IV, p. 13; *EFI*, II, p. 251; IV, Pp. 23, 101-102; V, Pp. 3, 275; IX, p. 113; XII, p. 265.
- 40) For this aspect of the role of the Mahajan institution see M. N. Pearson, "Political Participation in Mughal India", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, IX/2 (June, 1972), Pp. 113-131. For relations between merchants and administrators see Mahendra Pal Singh, "Merchants and the Local Administration and Civic Life in Gujarat during the Seventeenth Century", *Medieval India*, Pp. 221-226.
- 41) See *EFI*, XI, Pp. 298 ff.
- 42) For capital accumulation during the seventeenth century see B. G. Gokhale, "Capital Accumulation in XVIIth Century Western India", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, 39/40 (1964/65), Pp. 51-60.
- 43) *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, I, Pp. 7-8; J. N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, Pp. 90 ff.
- 44) For an interesting interpretation of this process see Karl Fisher, "Gujarats Kusten und Indonesianhandel in der ersten Halfte des 17. Jahrhunderts." Horst Kruger (Ed.), *Neue Indienkunde* (Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1970), Pp. 73-89.



*Notes on Chapter Seven*

- 1) See B. B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes* (London, 1961), Pp. 30-31.
- 2) Keshavlal H. Kamdar, "Surat Bandarno Karodahipati Mahajan Virji Voro", *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, XXX/4 (October, 1968), Pp. 276-279.
- 3) R. K. Mukerjee gives 1619-1670 as dates for Vora; obviously 1619 cannot be the date of Vora's birth as in that year he was already a well-established merchant, *Economic History of India*, p. 84.
- 4) *EFI*, II, Pp. 114, 231, 276.
- 5) *EFI*, I, Pp. 89, 101, 123, 148; also *Letters Received*, IV, p. 347; for details of the dispute see *EFI*, III, Pp. vi-viii.
- 6) *EFI*, III, Pp. 90, 94.
- 7) *EFI*, III, p. 327; VII, p. 7; VIII, Pp. 206, 257.
- 8) *Ain*, I, Pp. 23-24; also *Letters Received*, II p. 160, Note 1.
- 9) *EFI*, IV, p. 263; VIII, p. 282; IX, Pp. 30, 57; V, Pp. 82, 226; XIII, Pp. 24, 184.
- 10) *Letters Received*, I, p. 301; *EFI*, I, Pp. 54, 120, 131, 137, 325; III, Pp. 316, 334; IV, Pp. 301-302; VII, Pp. 18, 99, 145, 164-165, 210; VIII, Pp. 36, 38; IX, Pp. 57, 87; X, p. 17.
- 11) *EFI*, III, p. 190; VII, p. 276.
- 12) *EFI*, IV, Pp. 90, 281; V, p. 55.
- 13) *EFI*, VII, p. 204; VI, p. 236; VII, p. 330; VI, p. 288; VII, Pp. 7, 60, 86, 107, 108.
- 14) *EFI*, III, p. 212, VII, p. 253.
- 15) *EFI*, VII, p. 213; VIII, Pp. 105, 111, 217; III, p. 212; IV, p. 175.
- 16) *EFI*, III, Pp. 234, 271, 300-306; IV, Pp. 56, 144, 193-194, 216; V, Pp. 114-116, 216, 274; VII, p. 249; XIII, Pp. 193, 195.
- 17) *EFI*, V, p. 147; VII, Pp. 140-152; VIII, p. 18; X, Pp. 215, 368-369.
- 18) *EFI*, VII, p. 5; VIII, Pp. 5, 88-89, 275.
- 19) *EFI*, VIII, Pp. 291, 308.
- 20) *EFI*, IV, p. 157; VIII, p. 5; X, p. 72.
- 21) *EFI*, IX, Pp. 106, 108, 119, 222.
- 22) *EFI*, XI, p. 113; V, Pp. 24, 218.
- 23) *EFI*, VIII, Pp. 330, 331.
- 24) *EFI*, X, Pp. 16-17, 360; XI, p. 100.

- 25) *EFI*, VIII, Pp. 206, 257, 330; XII, p. 148; XIII, p. 206.
- 26) *EFI*, VI, Pp. 94, 108-110.
- 27) *EFI*, VIII, Pp. 18, 138.
- 28) *EFI*, XI, Pp. 303-313.
- 29) *EFI*, XII, p. 3.
- 30) *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 192.
- 31) For conditions and characteristics of this process see B. G. Gokhale, "Capital Accumulation in XVIIth Century Western India", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, 39/40 (1964-1965), Pp. 51-60.
- 32) *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 274, 285; a recent contribution by Lotika Varadarajan based on the memoirs of François Martin suggests that the date of Virji Vora's birth may be placed around 1600 and that in 1685 "he would have been eighty-five years old," also that Virji had a brother who was a junior partner in the business. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XIX/Pt. II (May 1976) Pp. 224-227.

#### *Notes on Chapter Eight*

- 1) For Portuguese piratical activities see *Letters Received*, II, Pp. 96, 97; III, p. 7; *EFI*, Pp. 3, 31; III, Pp. xiv, 139; IV, Pp. ix-x, 37, 66; V, p. 88; *Keeling's Journal*, p. 116; Rawlinson, *British Beginnings*, Pp. 23-24, 52, 57; *Embassy*, p. 664 on Portuguese weaknesses.
- 2) *Letters Received*, IV, p. 232; M. N. Pearson, "Wealth and Power: Indian Groups in the Portuguese Indian Economy", *South Asia*, No. 3 (August, 1973), Pp. 36-41; P. S. S. Pissurlencar, *Portuguese Records on Rustamji Manockji*, Pp. ix-xxxiii; for English records on Manekji see *Surat Factory Outward Letter Book*, II, Folios 320-329 (IOR, G/36/99 A).
- 3) For the careers of Kerridge, Rastell and other early English factors at Surat see *EFI*, I, Pp. vi, xxx, 53, 78, 111, 183; III, Pp. viii, ix, xii, xxix, 68, 277, 285; VI, Pp. vi, xxii, 11, 48, 179, 185; *Keeling's Journal*, p. 120 and Note 212; *Roe's Embassy*, Pp. 342 ff, 430 ff, 503 ff.
- 4) W. H. Moreland, *Relations of Golconda in the Early Eighteenth Century*, Pp. xxvii-xxxv; *EFI*, IV, Pp. xxxiv, 286, 322, 325.
- 5) On housing problems see *Letters Received*, IV, p. 349 and Note 1; *EFI*, I, Pp. xvi, 36 and Note 1, 37, 39, 80, 101, 103, 105, 114, 150; II, Pp. 305, 309, 321.
- 6) *Mundy*, II, Pp. 25-27; *Beschryvinghe*, Pp. 78-79.
- 7) *EFI*, XII, p. 10; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. 235, 297; *Fryer*, I, Pp. 214-215; *Ovington*, p. 227.

- 8) For details see B. G. Gokhale, "Merchants and Adventurers"; *History Today* (August 1971) Pp. 551-558.
- 9) *EFI*, VI, p. 205; VII, p. 18; X, p. 324.
- 10) *EFI*, II, p. 240, 360-361; IV, p. 255; VIII, p. 82; XII, p. 162.
- 11) *Letters Received*, IV, Pp. 346-347.
- 12) *EFI*, V, Pp. vii-ix.
- 13) *EFI*, IX, Pp. 138-139, 214 ff, 278; XI, p. 331.
- 14) *Letters Received*, II, Pp. 206-207; *EFI*, I, p. 138; II, Pp. xvii, xxix-xxxiii, 204-207, 264, 267, 271; III, p. 55; IV, p. 219; V, Pp. xxiii, 232-233; VI, p. xvi; *Embassy*, p. 344; W. H. Moreland (Ed.), *Relations of Golconda*, p. xxxii.
- 15) *EFI*, X, Pp. 304-305; XI, Pp. 92, 100; XIII, Pp. 182-183; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. Pp. vii, viii, 188, 193, 270-280; *Fryer*, II, p. 314.
- 16) *EFI*, I, p. 7, III, Pp. 1, 210, 314; IV, p. 194; V, Pp. 79, 246; VI, p. 18; VII, p. 132; VIII, Pp. 96, 97, 176, 272, 338; IX, p. 59; XI, Pp. 27, 213; XII, p. 14.
- 17) *EFI*, I, p. xix; II, p. 283; IV, p. 317; IX, Pp. 72, 77.
- 18) *Letters Received*, V, p. 30; *EFI*, III, Pp. 119-120; IV, p. 122 and Note 3.
- 19) *EFI*, Pp. xxxix, 26, 302-303; V, p. 35; VI, p. 2; VIII, Pp. 260, 299.
- 20) *Letters Received*, V, Pp. 30, 36-39, 187, 222; *EFI*, I, p. 237; II, p. 138; IV, Pp. xxxix, 117, 182, 229, 275, 302-303; V, Pp. 69, 301, 304; VI, p. 281; VII, p. 145; VIII, p. 330, XI, p. 212; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 243; *Keeling's Journal*, p. 118; *Mundy*, II, Pp. 27-28; *Ovington*, Pp. 234 ff.
- 21) *Letters Received*, I, p. 301; *EFI*, I, Pp. 190, 216; V, Pp. 30, 117, 151; VI, p. 280; VII, p. 152; IX, p. 119; X, Pp. 201-203; XII, p. 11; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 282; *Keeling's Journal*, p. 119.
- 22) *Ovington*, Pp. 222-223.
- 23) *EFI*, I, Pp. xxx, 13, 94, 138, 238; X, p. 319.
- 24) These estimates are based on figures compiled from the Factory Records which have many obvious gaps. *Letters Received*, III, p. 12; IV, p. 295; *EFI*, I, Pp. 30, 77, 178, 185, 235; III, Pp. xxxi-xxxv, 61, 93, 225, 333, 334; IV, Pp. 6, 291; V, Pp. 148 ff; VI, Pp. xiv, xxiv, 61, 220, 233; VII, Pp. v, xix, 41, 109, 120, 135; VIII, Pp. xiv, xx, xxii, xxiv, 197, 256, 257, 274, 295, 298, 328; IX, Pp. v, ix, xxi, 149, 299; X, Pp. 17, 50, 59, 206, 207, 209, 320, 337; XI, Pp. 16-17, 95, 187, 198-199, 326; XII, Pp. 10, 19, 20, 22, 169; XIII, Pp. 13, 188, 204, 208; *Generale Missiven*, III, p. 172; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, Pp. 55, 127, 128, 129, 298-301.
- 25) For details of these operations see B. G. Gokhale, "Some Aspects of Early English Trade with Western India (1600-1650)" and "English Trade with Western

India (1650-1700)" in *Journal of Indian History*, XL/2 (August, 1962), Pp. 277-280 and XLII/2 (August, 1964), Pp. 336 ff.

26) *EFI*, I, Pp. xii-xiii; also see Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, Pp. 112 ff. for restrictions on export of bullion. For random references to inter-Asian trade see *EFI*, I, Pp. xvii, 51, 162; III, p. 61; VI, p. 208; VII, p. 252; IX, Pp. vi, 109; X, p. 198.

27) For descriptions of Company's ships see C. Fawcett (Ed.), E. Cotton, *East Indiamen*; for sailing time see *EFI*, I, Pp. 203, 271; III, Pp. 23, 35, 109-111, 140; IV, Pp. 46, 305, V, p. 156; VI, Pp. 9-10, 170, 236; VII, Pp. xix, 183; VIII, Pp. x, 22; IX, p. 30; XI, p. 24; *Keeling's Journal*, Pp. 33-38; for freight earnings see *EFI*, II, Pp. 186, 198; III, Pp. 21, 161, 207; IV, Pp. 2, 130, 143, 216; V, Pp. 85, 147, 155, 176, 177; VI, Pp. 2, 10, 101, 209-210, 213, 241; VII, p. 16; X, Pp. 154, 198; XI, p. 316; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 206; Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, p. 82.

28) *EFI*, I, Pp. 54, 114, 201; III, p. 239; V, p. 83; VI, p. 201; VII, p. 26; VIII, p. vi; IX, Pp. 110, 122, 222, 253, 280, 282; X, p. 158; XIII, Pp. 193, 208; *EFI (NS)*, I, Pp. xvi, 191, 229, 238-239, 284; Shafat Ahmad Khan, *The English East India Trade in the XVIIth Century*, Pp. 229-230.

29) *Letters Received*, III, p. 304; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 1-2, 35, 55; *Broecke*, II, p. 111, Note 4; *Coen*, I, p. 60.

30) *Opkomst*, Pp. 36, 55, 174 ff; *Coen*, I, p. 206; *Broecke*, I, p. 130 and Note 4; *EFI*, I, Pp. 15, 265.

31) *Letters Received*, V, p. 154; *EFI*, I, Pp. 15, 17; *Embassy*, p. 481.

32) *EFI*, I, Pp. 149, 189; II, Pp. 276-277, 287, 294, 324; III, Pp. vii, 3-4, 6-7; IV, Pp. 181, 220, 282; VII, p. xxii; IX, Pp. xv ff; XII, p. 24.

33) *Broecke*, I, Pp. 5-10, 109, 113, 132; II, Pp. 25-252, 348, 358-359; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 46; *Opkomst*, Pp. 56-59, 65 ff, 77; *PVD*, II/3, p. 3; *EFI*, I, Pp. xi, xxxvi, 200; II, Pp. 183, 273; III, Pp. 202, 214; VI, p. 142.

34) *Broecke*, I, p. 112; II, p. 280; *Della Valle*, I, Pp. 24-26, 123; *EFI*, XI, Pp. 147 ff, 300-301, 309-310; *Fryer*, I, p. 251; also see Mandelslo, *Beschryvinghe*, Pp. 31 ff; *Opkomst*, Pp. 226-227; *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 726; *PVD*, III, Pp. 241, 257, 290.

35) *Broecke*, II, Pp. 331, 333; *Della Valle*, I, Pp. 24, 123.

36) For these and other persons see *Broecke*, I, p. 112; II, Pp. 284, 330, 339, 345; *Generale Missiven*, I, Pp. 107, 162, 237, 297, 317, 523, 531, 610, 618, 623, 649, 731; II, Pp. 48, 51, 316, 375, 415, 547, 623; II, Pp. 244, 247, 333, 435, 436, 490, 809; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 23, 49, 51; III, p. 27; IV, p. 184; *Opkomst*, p. 96; *EFI*, III, p. 329; V, p. 169; VIII, Pp. ii, 20, 95, 104, 198, 286; IX, Pp. xi-xii; W. H. Moreland, "Johan van Twist's Description of India" in *JIH*, XIV/1 (1937), Pp. 63-77.

- 37) *Broecke*, II, Pp. 295-338; *Generale Missiven*, III, Pp. 40, 170; *EFI*, I, p. 200; II, Pp. 108, 110, 159, 189; III, p. 191; IV, Pp. 13, 75, 89, 103; V, Pp. 265, 271; VI, Pp. 38, 196; VII, Pp. xxii, 160; VIII, Pp. 126, 129, 139, 156.
- 38) For instances see *EFI*, IV, p. xxxviii; V, p. 42.
- 39) These figures are picked from *Coen*, I, Pp. 612, 634, 710; *Generale Missiven*, I, Pp. 107, 176, 364, 427, 428, 476, 622; II, Pp. 34, 35, 129, 202, 215, 225, 250, 258, 292, 316, 336, 339, 341, 342, 362, 375, 376, 414, 471, 548, 550, 580, 624, 728, 731, 743; III, Pp. 36, 39, 104, 145, 228, 245, 275, 312, 335, 370, 391, 437, 450, 472, 523, 879, 611, 615, 636, 668, 703, 735, 749, 775, 811, 831, 858, 875, 886, 891, 916; IV, Pp. 15, 20, 740; *Broecke*, II, Pp. 266, 289, 292, 293, 295, 347; *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 14, 204-212, 213-228.
- 40) *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 204-228.
- 41) *PVD*, II/3, Pp. 28 ff, 127 ff.
- 42) *Generale Missiven*, I, p. 319; II, Pp. 51, 66; III, Pp. 558, 662; IV, Pp. 247, 671, 739; *PVD*, II, p. 29; II/3, Pp. 10, 28, 229-233; *Opkomst*, Pp. 56, 167-168; *EFI*, II, Pp. 43, 187, 199; III, Pp. 90, 189; IV, p. 27; V, Pp. 1, 82; VII, Pp. 36, 84, 145, 164, 167; VIII, p. 278; X, p. 278; X 5-6; XI, Pp. 321, 330; XII, Pp. 27, 28, 150, 166; XIII, p. 194; *Ovington*, p. 134.
- 43) For details of this episode see *PVD*, III/2, Pp. 19-24; *EFI*, VII, p. 160; VIII, Pp. xviii, xxii, 210, 286-287; *Broecke*, II, p. 284 for his relations with Mughals.
- 44) S. P. Sen, *The French in India*, Pp. 31 ff; *Storia*, I, p. 61; *Bernier*, p. 189 and Note.
- 45) *William Hedges*, II, p. 227; G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, p. 31 and Note.
- 46) For details see Sen, *Op., Cit.*, Pp. 55 ff; *Abbe' Carre'*, p. 391; *EFI (NS)*, I, p. 215.





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